Issue 114

UNICEF news

# On the people's wavelength: Communications for social change

- Sri Lanka: Dear home doctor, help me please
- Tanzania: Villagers teaching us to teach them
- Brazil: Telling mothers "You *can* breastfeed!"
- Pakistan: Don't just say "salt"...

UNICEF news

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# Contents




**Editor:** Maggie Black
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**Cover photograph:**
ICEF 9296/Sassoon. A family planning lesson in the hills of Nepal.


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# Communications: a potent force for change

More than a medium, more than a message, communication is the total process whereby people understand each other, and each other's environment and aspirations. Too often it is seen by the "haves" merely as a way of passing on instructions and ideas to the "have-nots." Correcting this misperception, and placing real communication at the centre of development programmes, can help overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of social change. By SALIM LONE.

In discussing ways to improve his country's economic performance, Mozambique's Minister of Information was recently quoted in a *New York Times* article as saying that what was needed was a return to the methods the ruling Frelimo party used during the liberation struggle against the Portuguese colonies.

"Then the people in the liberated areas would debate and find solutions to their problems," said the Minister, Luis Cobaco. "Now there is a tendency to call in the engineer to solve the problem, without discussing it with the people who are experiencing the difficulty."

The Minister's words reflected the growing realization in the international community that a major shortcoming of many development efforts of the past two decades has been the absence of close communication between all those—planners, professionals and the population—involved in development programmes.

Not that awareness of the importance of communication wasn't there. But just as the process of development was seen primarily as the provision of goods and services to the people, communication was conceived as a static, one-way flow of information from the "professionals" to the masses. Enormous amounts of energy and resources were spent on developing a technology which would make "communication" as instantaneous and far-reaching as possible and the whole exercise was predicated on the notion that those providing this technology were also the ones to provide the ideas and the solutions for those at the listening—receiving—end. As Juan E. Bordenava said at a recent UNICEF workshop, this communication paradigm "fitted the requirements of the international and national patterns of domination of the peripheral by the central countries, and of the less privileged majorities by the social elites."

The sophisticated new systems—new generations of satellites being launched, submarine cables being laid, optical fibres and lasers being harnessed for information transport—actually emphasize the technological mastery of one group and heighten the fear of scientific incompetence of the other. They have even sometimes become the instruments for hindering the very participation and interaction that communication is meant to promote. In the words of Armando Vargas, the former President of the Centre for Third World Communications and now Costa Rica's Minister of Information, the telecommunications revolution is "playing perhaps an even more important role than the steam engine in the industrial revolution. But it is asserting increasing control of our economies, ways of life and social values...and this control is in the hands of powerful organizations whose principal objectives are increased private profits and an enlarged market share."

It is from the development arena that some of the strongest challenges to the established communication structures are emerging. One element of the challenge comes from those struggling to place communication between the deprived communities and those providing them expertise, at the centre of development planning. Contending that human communication is the pivot on which balances the success or failure not only of individual programmes but of the whole process of development, these protagonists argue that traditional societies are socially literate. Over generations, they established their own norms and technologies, which were dynamic and constantly propelled the societies to higher stages of production. Not to understand this, and to perceive third world communities as helpless bystanders who are too backward to understand the interventions that are being organized on their behalf, is a sure recipe for failure.

The argument would seem painfully obvious were it not for the fact that even to this day, the vast majority of development programmes are conceived and executed without a serious communication component. David Mason and Ramzan Azhar describe in an article on pages 14-16 how a scheme to provide much-needed iodinated salt to a region in Pakistan suffering from an extremely high incidence of goitre foundered badly because the entire promotional campaign was devised without even a rudimentary understanding of the people's sensitivities. In a deeply conservative, Muslim population, the salt was promoted with photographs of a smiling, unveiled young woman, to which the bulk of the population reacted with hostility. It was only after the unsold salt packets began piling up on store shelves that UNICEF's comunications staff in Islamabad were asked to come in and do some quick rescue work.

Communications personnel are rankled by this "plan first, communicate only after

*Salim Lone is a Kenyan journalist, until recently Editor of the monthly magazine* **Viva**, *currently an information consultant with* UNICEF *in New York.*

initial failure" syndrome. But as more and more of those after-the-fact appeals are heard, it is becoming clear to planners that communication is not merely another hardware component consisting of posters, radio messages, and so on, but a central and decisive factor of any programme. Whether it is an effort to reduce the death rate from water-borne diseases in West Africa or an attempt to increase the rice yield in Asia, the communication of the ideas involved does not take place automatically. On the contrary: not only is their value far from self-evident to programme recipients, but their displacement of an existing set of strongly-held ideas is a complex undertaking.

Helping communications gain a more appropriate place in the development context has been enormously helped by recent evidence about its impact. We have seen, for example, the massive shift away from breastfeeding in just one generation. The aggressive use of marketing techniques and the mass media to convince mothers of the merits of formula feeds has contributed to the breastfeeding decline. In a Latin America study we have seen how two groups of children from identical, impoverished social classes show markedly different nutritional status, thanks in the main to the ownership of radios by the healthier families. And we have seen the yearning in many countries for expensive imported clothing inferior in quality to locally made garments, on the strength again of the myths and lifestyles promoted by their communication environment. We are now realizing that when we talk of communications in the context of social and behavioural change, we need to consider not only the "medium" and the "message" but also all those ideas, habits and aspirations acquired through social contact and interaction.

## Means and ends

Amongst those who have been advocating a more careful study of communication for social development is Andreas Fugelsang, a development specialist who learned a great deal from the cultures in which he lived. Noting the tenuousness of traditional culture, which "is a carefully balanced man/environment interaction system, in which every detail has both technological function and spiritual significance and cannot be disrupted without drastic repercussions for the function of the whole," Fugelsang argues that the *way* new systems, processes and ideas are introduced into a way of life is as important as the benefits which those new systems and ideas hope to generate. To introduce what seems eminently logical to the outsider might in fact strain the recipient community's delicate fabric of socio-economic cohesion.

Fugelsang gives the example of an agriculture extension programme in Ethiopia which introduced a new plough with a steel shave which was going to substantially enhance agricultural yield. But reception of the new plough was unenthusiastic: the plough was heavier, and the agricultural base could not support the better feeding of the oxen necessary to enable them to pull it.

To work in these traditional environments, Fugelsang argues insistently, requires sensitive and astute workers who can sympathetically comprehend the web of social relations of the group. Villages are not the collection of individuals that industrial, urban populations tend to be, and their attitude towards their leaders is different too. Modern societies allow professionals to lead them not necessarily for what they are intrinsically, but for their position in the system. But in the village, a professional will have credibility problems until he or she has proved his worth on a purely human basis. "Villagers live in communion," says Fugelsang, "and life there is characterized by intense communication and interaction." John Siceloff's experience in Peru and Tanzania described on pages 18-19 provide a concrete illustration of this point.

The distorted view of traditional societies that Fugelsang and others have in the last decade tried to correct was responsible for the hierarchical approach typical of so much development work. This approach is closely related to the paternalistic method of teaching described by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire as a "banking" system, where information is passed down from the active teacher to the passive recipient. In Freire's view, this "prescriptive teaching" diminishes the learner who is encouraged not to act upon his or her world, but to reflect back the ideas given by the teacher. Freire counters this with the notion of "liberating education" which treats learners not as objects but as subjects who act upon their world to change it. The tenets of Freire's thought are that no-one can teach anyone else; no-one learns alone; people learn together, acting in and on their world.

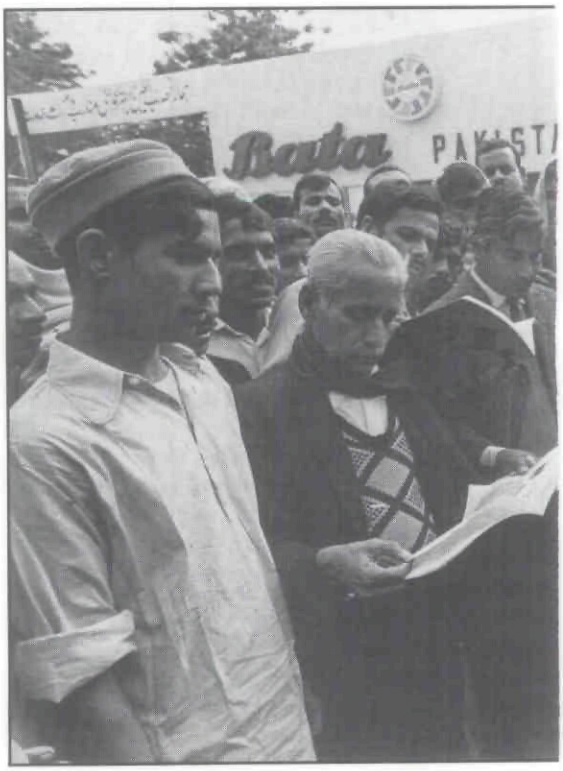
Freire rejects conventional education as the tool ruling classes use to discourage the poor from learning and understanding the bases of their deprivations. The learning experience's primary purpose is to help change society, says Freire, particularly that aspect which has denied the illiterates an opportunity to participate in their own destiny.

## The commercial communicators

Among those who must be classified as successful in fully investigating their target-group and understanding how to communicate with them are the commercial manufacturers. Their advertising campaigns have revolutionized consumption habits and lifestyles across the world. They have saturated the media with advertising carefully researched to gauge the concerns of their audience, and have succeeded far better in changing behaviour than have consciously-designed development programmes. In most third world countries, companies marketing agricultural products have reached remote farming communities with weed killers, fertilizer and insecticides. But try asking the same villagers if they know what is the best remedy for diarrhoea. And in many poor urban areas people will pay hard-earned cash for snacks and junk food, persuaded by commercial advertising that they are somehow "better" than vegetables from the backyard.

A growing number of voices, recognizing the impact of commercial advertising, are

*"Communication of ideas does not take place automatically. On the contrary, their displacement of an existing set of ideas is a complex undertaking."* ICEF 7326/Wolff



therefore advocating that their techniques be adopted in the promotion of social development. They argue that not to do so is to abdicate the print and air waves to those whose primary aim is profit and whose objectives are in direct conflict with the development propagandists. Richard Manoff is an experienced advertising man who has used his commercial skills to promote developmental messages in the third world. "Against the enormous power of the mass media to fashion food habits via advertising, the nutrition educator confined to traditional channels doesn't stand a chance," he asserts.

Manoff begins with a religious conviction that there is no idea that cannot be promoted as are commercial products. The way to get your message across, he says, is to create one which is short and confined to a single idea. "If you look through history, you will find that the great messages have been simple and short. Moses only had 10 commandments and they hardly add up to 60 words, and the 17 Rock Edicts of Ashoka are equally brief and to the point.

"Since we are not trying to make the rural mother a nutritionist or a doctor, I don't see why so many of you are writing books or pamphlets which few people except your colleagues are going to read," he says. "The development worker's approach is often too serious and academic, and therefore less impactful. For example, when I was helping promote oral rehydration therapy in Nicaragua, we tried to make the message simple and catchy. We just said: 'Make *super lemonada* at home – it will fight diarrhoea'. The lemonade concept was one most mothers related to immediately, and that is basically what anti-dehydration is: lemon, salt and sugar. And we didn't give it any formal name such as ORS, either. The reach of the message was enormous."

## Participation and communication: two sides of one coin

While many educators and communicators do not accept Freire's ideological analysis, his emphasis on participation reflects what is probably the strongest new orientation in development work. The whole strength of primary health care initiatives around the world, as well as the efforts to elicit community participation, are indications of this recognition. The mere diffusion of innovations, it is being accepted, will at best have limited impact on the drive to increase the span, leave alone the quality of life. UNICEF's current focus on, among other things, oral rehydration therapy and breastfeeding, is based on certain social, *not* technological, configurations.

The technology, of course needs to be available, and at low cost. But what really counts is how the technical intervention is integrated into the social structure of the target community. For example, oral rehydration therapy has been technically available now for many years. But it has brought about no serious reduction in diarrhoea-related child mortality (over five million deaths a year) because of social perceptions about diarrhoea. Firstly, it is not regarded by most "target" people as life-threatening, since every child is frequently afflicated, but rarely dies from diarrhoea. Secondly, most mothers think that the way to stop the loss of fluid that characterizes diarrhoea is by ceasing to feed the child completely.

Clearly, therefore, any intervention aimed at the rehydration of imperiled children must first understand and address the community's view of the illness – and that is what communication for social development is all about. As Revy Tuluhungwa, chief of UNICEF's Project Support Communications Section stresses: "Communication is the process through which human beings share social and cultural interactions, information, knowledge, experience, ideas, skills, motivations and aspirations." In other words, communication is decidedly not the diffusion of information and instruction alone.

Clearly, neither commercial advertising techniques, nor a comprehensive communication strategy, is going to solve the most fundamental problem facing humanity, which is to eradicate poverty, But correct communication will play its role. For decades now, the mass media and others have promoted development as a proccess of "modernity", with technology providing the answers to human deprivations. Tractors will replace oxploughs, earth homes will give way to structures of stone and steel, with refrigerators and cookers inside, and milk will be available in cartons. So people started insisting on having the latest, most modern, most technologically "superior" products: injections from the doctor, instead of a tonic, for example; formula feeds instead of breastmilk; a car instead of an ox-cart; a video receiver instead of a school textbook.

## A more wholesome message

It is now not uncommon for communications practitioners to preach more modest, more wholesome and more attainable goals. The emphasis is on social cohesion, the strength and wholeness of all cultures, the use of appropriate technology, and raising living standards not through material acquisition but through improved nutrition, health, and other essentials. We don't want to transform our environment overnight but to make it more productive and liveable, and share more equitably the fruits of human labour.

Such a message will not eradicate poverty. The causes of poverty are structural, and these structures, basically exclusionary and exploitative, will ensure that the communication process remains in the control of the privileged. But despite this major constraint, a comprehensive communication strategy can help awaken the people to unchain their energies in the service of development. This dynamism is difficult to trigger, because in every social system, regardless of its insufficiencies, routine and tradition provide deep security. A culture is a collective identity and cultural change, even when it is generated by the people themselves, can be disorienting and fearsome.

The last frontier in development is also the largest. Knowledge is a language with an infinite vocabulary. It is also the only resource in the world which actually grows with use and which cannot be depleted. To communicate effectively what we know will be for all of us to learn that much more.□

# They stand and wait

**The Village Education and Resource Centre is so totally committed to the principles of self-reliance and voluntary participation that its development workers will wait months, sometimes even more than a year, for the villagers themselves to indicate what problems need tackling. By KEIKO·NISHINO.**

"When she came the first time, about four years ago, I thought she was a government official who had come to assess our households and village land," said Samirunnessa, a 35-year-old housewife. "But she was very different from the officials because she often came afterwards just to chat with me and some other village women."

The unknown visitor was Mrs. Hosneara Minu, a field worker of the Village Education and Resource Centre (VERC). Uttarpara was one of the places that she visited ostensibly to test the village women's ability to identify their daily activities on a colourful flip-chart. The testing was done in a friendly, conversational manner that created not the slightest anxiety amongst the village women – in fact they did not even realise that they were being studied.

VERC was formed with the express aim of seeking new ways in which to communicate development ideas to those rural groups who need and actually seek them. VERC is unique for its heavy emphasis on the initiative and motivation of the villagers themselves to articulate and tackle their problems. Working under the motto "Self-actualization", VERC workers like Mrs. Minu visit rural areas to understand the level of literacy, the extent of development awareness, and the resources available locally. But the social workers never take any initiative themselves: they wait patiently for the villagers to express interest in a particular area of activity, and they become involved in helping plan projects only at that stage.

Mrs. Minu therefore visited Uttarpara regularly for almost a year before discussions of any development-oriented programmes began. During that year she established personal relationships with many of the villagers, making sure that she visited at least twice a month. In casual, friendly chats she gathered information about the people of Uttarpara, and analyzed their needs and inclinations.

*"Samirunnessa had never thought of saving. 'Save?' she asked. 'How? Where would I put the money?'"* ICEF 9297/Nishino

It was Samirunnessa herself who brought up a very concrete problem that she, as well as many other Uttarpara families, faced. Samirunnessa was worried about how to plan for the marriages of her three little girls, which would cost quite a bit of money. The family was landless, and their income could not provide the resources needed for the kind of weddings tradition required. In fact, over half of Uttarpara's farmers are landless, and work as day labourers in nearby fields for very low wages.

Because the village can only be reached by a bus, followed by a river crossing in a small boat and a two-kilometre walk, it has remained cut off from contact with the outside world. So on the one hand the villagers have retained their traditional social structures, and on the other have always welcomed the intrusion of the rare visitor from the outside world. Hence Samirunnessa's anxiety over her daughters' marriages – and her readiness to discuss it with Mrs. Minu.

Having heard the full extent of the problem, Mrs. Minu asked Samirunnessa: "Have you ever thought of starting to save?" It was a novel notion for the village woman. "Save?" she asked. "How? Where would I put the money?" Minu explained that she could set aside one *taka* each week safely in one of her household pots.

## Putting the money aside

Samirunnessa became very excited about it, and began the "project" in earnest. But as the savings grew, she also became worried that her husband might be angry if he found out that she was putting money aside. She hid her clay pot among the pieces of junk in the house so that nobody would find it. She sometimes reported to Minu how much she had saved. After several months, Minu asked Samirunnessa, "I can see your happiness with your savings. Why don't you tell your friends about the experience?"

Again, Samirunnessa was afraid to reveal her secret to other people. However, one day she told her neighbour, Bosirunnessa, 15, about what she had achieved. Bosirunnessa, who was young and active, immediately took up the idea. Encouraged by this response, Samirunnessa spread the idea among other friends, and then she actually gathered a group of women together when Minu visited again. Quite naturally, Samirunnessa had become the leader of a group and the "piggybank" system rapidly began to take hold in Uttarpara.

Almost a year after Minu had made her first visit to Uttarpara, she brought along three young men and women to the village. They were wearing local costumes and gathered many villagers in an open field. There they put on some amusing plays about village life; some of the sketches depicted success stories, and others, failures.

One success story described the introduction of a women's society in a village, how

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it developed and enabled the members to take up income-generating activities, and then finally, how children fully adopted this system in the following generation. The stories of failure emphasized that the cause was usually the self-centredness of certain members who used their society's funds for personal gain and how the society eventually disappeared, to the members' great loss.

"It was very easy to understand the important points of how to organize a society," recalls Bosirunnessa. "Since we already knew how to save money and were convinced of the value of saving, we immediately called a meeting to discuss how to form our own women's society in Uttarpara."

Everybody in the meeting expressed an interest in starting to save through a society but one problem remained unsolved, the men's reaction to this activity. Rural menfolk tend to dislike women's independent activities. In this case, however, the drama had helped a great deal. The village head had been interested in the skits the VERC people had put on, and agreed to give the women a chance to form a society. His endorsement also had the effect of stifling other potential male complaints.

After a year's saving, five members of the society went with some VERC social workers to Manikganj, about 50 kilometres from Uttarpara. The trip was a totally new experience, for none of the women had ever gone beyond their village boundary before. The bus-ride was exciting enough, but the most exciting part of the visit was the discussion they had with the women in the Manikganj society. The group in Manikganj had already started income-generating activities such as weaving, painting, sewing, and goat and cow raising. The five women returned to Uttarpara with many ideas which they then put to the other members at their monthly meeting. They all carefully discussed the feasibility of each activity, and settled on goat and cow raising.

Four years have now passed and the total savings for the society on August 6th, 1982 amounted almost to 3,000 *taka* (US $126). The society has received a 1,000 *taka* loan from VERC and has purchased one goat (250 *taka*) and one cow (1,160 *taka*), and rented a small plot of land on which to grow sugarcane (1,000 taka). The rest of the savings are used for loans to needy members. The goat and cow will be sold during the coming Eid holidays, and the members will then discuss ways of how to invest the income most profitably.

*"We were convinced of the value of saving. So we immediately called a meeting to discuss how to form a women's society." Centre left, Mrs. Minu from* VERC. ICEF 9298/Nishino

## VERC's participatory approach

VERC grew out of the Save the Children Fund (USA) operation and was incorporated in September 1977 with financial and technical assistance from UNICEF. As in the Uttarpara case, VERC always utilises the villagers' own initiative and motivation to improve their own lives. For each new situation, the information gathered is discussed by the staff of VERC and they plan their strategy according to the villagers' reactions and their psychological development. They use dramas, flip charts, photographs and cassette tapes, which are greatly welcomed by people because of the absence of such entertainment in rural Bangladesh.

"We just wait until villagers want and feel the need for our assistance," said Mr. Shaikh A. Halim, project director of VERC. "Without the villagers' own participation, no message will get through."

It seems like a terribly long drawn-out process, but VERC's aim is for the longer term. They are planning for future generations to inherit these ideas.

As far as Uttarpara is concerned, the next step is a literacy programme. Minu and other field workers analyzed the women in Uttarpara and felt they were ready for it. So eight field workers carefully developed a drama script, which begins with one village women's society member, Rabia, wanting to know how much she had saved. However, nobody in the village could read and write and no proper record had been maintained. Rabia became furious and called a meeting but no one could help her. So, the members consulted VERC workers and the workers said, "If you can write your own name and numbers, you can keep your own record."

To write one's own name was a dream and reading seemed even more difficult for the villagers – until they saw the drama. The VERC workers took out several little brown items from a paper bag. They looked like biscuits but they were letters made of clay. The workers said, "It's simple. Look at these letters and imitate the shape. See, you can write."

The play lasted for 20 minutes, and was watched by about 50 villagers, including men and children. Everyone enjoyed the amusing drama, and laughed, nodded or clapped as they saw their own concerns being reflected. The women actually told Minu that it was as if the situation in Uttarpara had been portrayed, and they had really identified with it.

After half an hour's discussion, 17 women out of 33 members volunteered to join the literacy class starting the following week. Two women social workers will conduct this class three days a week.

The women in Uttarpara have taken the second step towards self-reliance. It may take another year before they embark on another, but that is not nearly so important as the fact that something is definitely happening within their consciousnesses which is laying the groundwork for a profound change in their way of thinking. And that is where the real battle for development takes place. □

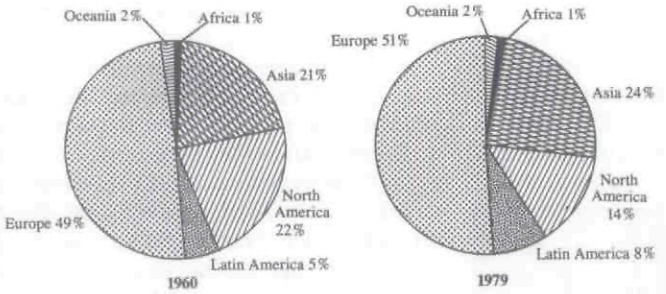
# Communications: the facts

## The printed word

### Newspapers

Circulation is growing, but the worldwide total of daily newspapers is fairly static, partly because of competition from radio and television. They are serviced by the press agencies, including the big five: Agence France-Presse, AP, Reuters, Tass, and UPI, as well as over 100 national news agencies.

#### Distribution of daily newspapers by continent




Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1981

### Books

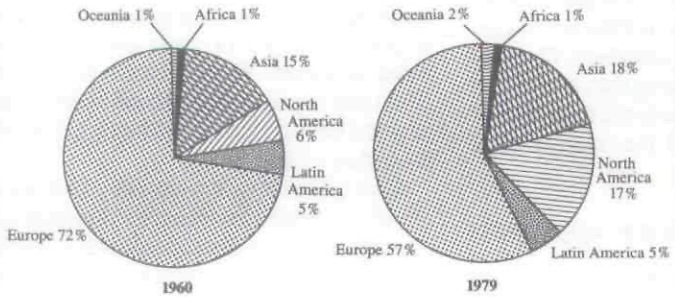
This century has seen a great increase in book production, due to the growing numbers of literates, the arrival of paperbacks, improvements in production techniques, and the spread of libraries. Between 1955 and 1975 world book production doubled in titles, and tripled in numbers of copies.

#### Number of titles published

| | 1955 | 1960 | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1979 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 3,000 | 5,000 | 7,000 | 8,000 | 11,000 | 12,000 |
| Asia | 54,000 | 51,000 | 61,000 | 75,000 | 88,000 | 139,000 |
| Europe (incl. USSR) | 186,000 | 239,000 | 260,000 | 317,000 | 343,000 | 381,000 |
| Oceania | 1,000 | 2,000 | 5,000 | 7,000 | 5,000 | 12,000 |
| North America | 14,000 | 18,000 | 58,000 | 83,000 | 92,000 | 112,000 |
| Latin America | 11,000 | 17,000 | 19,000 | 22,000 | 29,000 | 33,000 |
| **World total** | **269,000** | **332,000** | **426,000** | **521,000** | **568,000** | **689,000** |

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1981

#### Distribution of book production by continent




Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1981

#### Libraries and their holdings

(information collected 1974-1978 from 125 countries)

| | nat'l | higher education | school | special | public |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Africa** | 12 | 56 | 229 | 179 | 245 |
| **North America** | 12 | 3,510 | 84,534 | 1,282 | 10,215 |
| **South America** | 7 | 958 | 426 | 825 | 3,993 |
| **Asia** | 17 | 1,605 | 49,962 | 4,059 | 6,995 |
| **Europe** | 46 | 6,008 | 44,036 | 24,397 | 53,803 |
| **Oceania** | 3 | 142 | 1,574 | 143 | 210 |
| **USSR** | 2 | 141 | 179,700 | 68,531 | 164,621 |

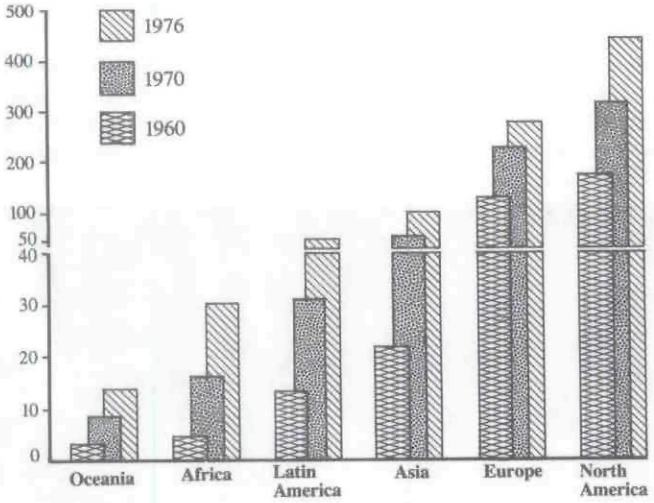
Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1980

## The broadcast word

### Radio

Radio is the most ubiquitous of the mass media. There are well over 1,000 million radios in use around the world: 1 for every 4 people on earth. Radio is the cheapest and easiest way of reaching a mass audience, particularly in rural areas, many of whom are illiterate.

#### Number of radios by continent




Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1980

#### Number of radios per 1,000 inhabitants

| | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1979 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Africa | 33 | 45 | 70 | 77 |
| North America | 1,173 | 1,353 | 1,793 | 1,951 |
| Latin America | 138 | 180 | 249 | 252 |
| Asia | 39 | 48 | 80 | 108 |
| Europe (incl. USSR) | 273 | 341 | 380 | 450 |
| Oceania | 189 | 428 | 606 | 863 |
| **Developed countries** | **449** | **533** | **687** | **801** |
| **Developing countries** | **42** | **58** | **83** | **97** |
| **World total** | **207** | **241** | **303** | **336** |

Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1981

#### Radio for education

The difficulties of reaching women and children with educational programmes in remote rural areas has led to the establishment of radio schools. In Haiti, UNICEF helps train listening group leaders and provides transistors.

ICEF 8867/Cooper

# The talking picture

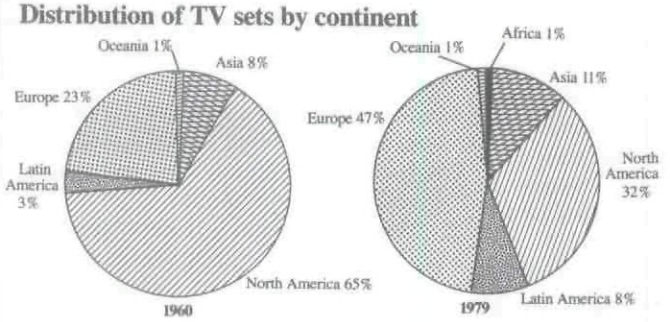
## Television

The age of television dawned in 1936. By 1955 17 countries had a regular TV service, and by 1970 over 100 were transmitting TV programmes. But there are even greater disparities than for press and radio in the distribution of TV receivers. In poorer countries the TV audience is confined to urban centres and high income groups. Almost half of the developing countries have only one TV studio.

### Number of television sets by continent

| | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1979 | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1979 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (total millions) | | | | (per 1,000 inhabitants) | | | |
| Africa | 0.6 | 1.2 | 2.5 | 6.7 | 1.9 | 3.4 | 6.2 | 15 |
| North America | 76 | 92 | 133 | 151 | 355 | 407 | 562 | 619 |
| Latin America | 8 | 17 | 27 | 37 | 32 | 60 | 83 | 103 |
| Asia | 19 | 27 | 37 | 50 | 18 | 22 | 27 | 32 |
| Europe (incl. USSR) | 75 | 125 | 169 | 219 | 132 | 196 | 241 | 294 |
| Oceania | 2.4 | 3.5 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 137 | 200 | 258 | 295 |
| **Developed countries** | **170** | **244** | **334** | **407** | **166** | **227** | **298** | **353** |
| **Developing countries** | **11** | **22** | **40** | **64** | **7.3** | **13** | **21** | **29** |
| **World total** | **181** | **266** | **374** | **471** | **72** | **96** | **122** | **139** |

### Distribution of TV sets by continent

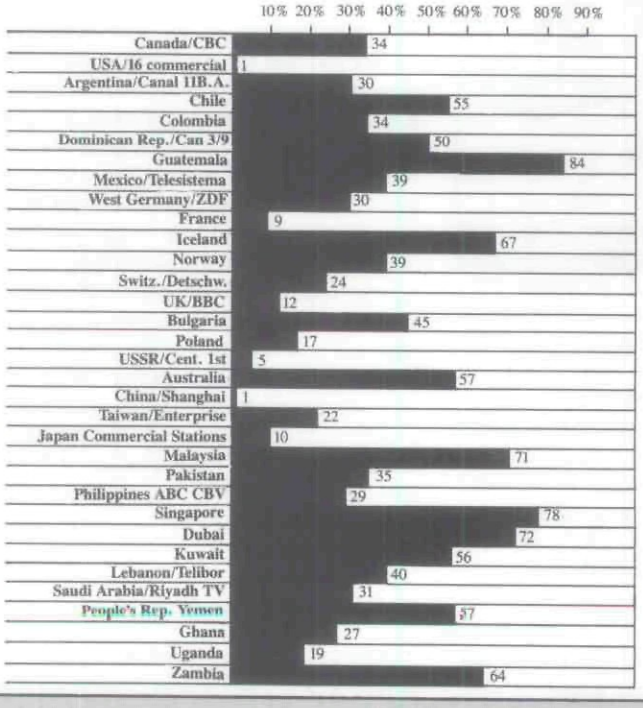



Source: UNESCO Statistical Yearbook 1981

## Programme content

An hour of polished TV can cost $200,000 to make. So smaller countries, with hours of empty schedules to fill, buy their entertainment second-hand. But along with the time-fillers you get—free of charge—the values of Dallas or Brideshead Revisited.

### Imported TV programmes



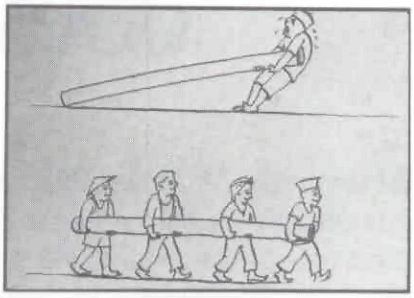

Tapio Varis. Global Traffic in Television (1974)/New Internationalist, No. 119

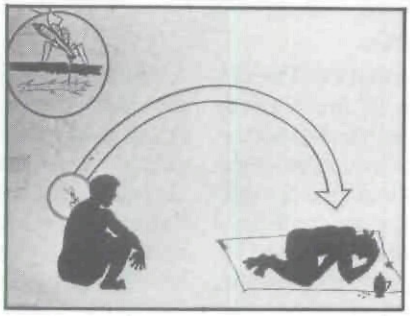
# The visual aid

Graphic illustrations with simple didactic messages are often used in health and education programmes to reinforce ideas about hygiene, nutrition, child care, disease prevention etc., particularly in rural areas where it is difficult to show films and use modern educational technology. In the past ten years it has become recognized that people unused to "reading" messages from pictures may learn nothing, or something quite different from that intended.

### From Indonesia:

1. The social message that co-operation makes work lighter was not perceived by 28% of the respondents in a West Sumatran village.





2. Instead of understanding that the result of being bitten by the mosquito was that the man fell sick, many respondents saw this picture as that of two people, one of whom is sleeping.

### From Pakistan:

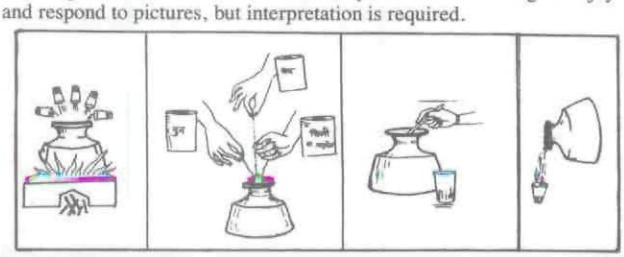
1. Packet designs for the promotion of iodinated salt to prevent goitre were tested in northern Pakistan. A distinctive local man's hat with flower (below) was seen as a giant caterpiller and ants emerging from a tree.



2. The design chosen showed the landscape of the area (above). It provoked no adverse response among the tradition-bound local people, and was well understood once the fir tree was cut to a size lower than the mountaintop.

### From Nepal:

A joint National Development Service/UNICEF study: "Communicating with pictures" revealed that, while most villagers recognized objects in the pictures shown, the ideas behind them were almost never conveyed. The series below was meant to illustrate how to make rehydration mixture for diarrhoea treatment. The series' message was incomprehensible to all 89 villagers who were shown it. The study's conclusion: villagers enjoy and respond to pictures, but interpretation is required.



# How the message does not get through

The text read: "A breast-fed baby rarely gets diarrhoea." Unambiguous enough. But unknown to the writer of the message, this exhortation was going to be *spoken* to an audience – and many of them heard the message as: "A breast-fed baby really gets diarrhoea."

By ANDREA OKWESA.

A report to the Third Asian and Pacific Population Conference of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) relates how bamboo poles were used in demonstrating to men in a remote Asian community how to wear condoms. Months later, when the trainers returned to the village, they were confronted by groups of angry pregnant women: where had the men been keeping their condoms? On bamboo poles.

The incident graphically illustrates what can happen when communication messages fail to be appropriate, and do not provide the listeners with enough information to reason their way to sensible conclusions. It points to the critical need to know one's audience intimately, particularly the degree of the community's experience in dealing with new ideas, and their receptiveness to change.

Jamaica's experience has shown how lack of such understanding can result in grievous misinterpretation of the message. In conjunction with Catholic Relief Services, the Ministry of Health initiated a programme aimed at reducing the prevalence of childhood malnutrition. A history of little or no success in combating this problem by conventional methods led fieldworkers to look for new communications techniques. One part of the programme was a scheme for changing attitudes and practices related to breastfeeding and infant feeding. Materials and media to be used were slides, booklets, a flannel board and cutouts, and practical demonstrations given by community health workers. The target group was low-income mothers attending ante-natal and child welfare clinics in two parishes of the island.

*Andrea Okwesa is Media Officer/Editor at the Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI).*

The first problem to surface concerned the scripts. They had been written to be read, rather than spoken. When they were read aloud to some groups, certain words were not heard correctly. A word like "rarely," for instance, sounded like "really." Imagine the impact of a statement like: "A breast-fed baby really (rarely) gets diarrhoea."


Other words, although properly pronounced, were unintelligible to the audience because the script had been prepared without an understanding of local idiom. In Jamaican colloquial speech, "food" refers to ground provisions, i.e. starchy roots, tubers and fruits, such as yam, breadfruit, and potato. This restricted meaning of the word made its use puzzling and sometimes actually evoked laughter. Mothers were asked: "What are two foods that could be used together to make a good meal for baby?" The answers were "yam and potato" or other combinations of starchy roots common in their diets. When asked to give examples of three of four foods to make multimixes, their answers reflected their own local grasp of the meanings, negating the objective of the fieldworkers' carefully planned lessons.

The same situation arose over the word "feed," which to the average Jamaican means canned baby formula or "baby feeding," so that mothers were bewildered by the use of the word as a verb instead of a noun as in a question like: "What should a mother feed her one-year-old baby?" and were unable to give the desired response.

When confronted with development jargon like the word "steps," the situation was even more complicated, such as in: "What are some of the *steps* that a mother should take to make sure that her baby keeps healthy?" The learners, accustomed only to the meaning of the word in their experience, could make no sense of the question and a room of blank faces stared back at the researcher.

Writers of development materaials often advocate "personalizing" texts using "you" or "we," so that learners will identify more closely with the message and relate it to their own situations. This suggestion was made in a recent pre-test of some CFNI materials on anaemia, aimed at an audience with a low level of literacy. But mothers could not appreciate the sense of the word "you" as an impersonal pronoun representing an average person, the sort of person the speaker was addressing. Each mother in the group took the "you" quite literally to mean *herself*, so when asked a question like "What fruits do you juice for baby?", each one described exactly what she did, e.g. "I give orange juice" or "He won't drink juice" or "I don't give him any." Mothers may have known what fruits to juice, but were not able to answer the question.

## Knowing the audience

A thorough background knowledge of the audience being addressed is essential. Only

then will the communicator be able to respond to the specific behavioural needs of the audience, and formulate the most appropriate strategies and approaches for delivering messages. This information needs to be collected early in the programme planning process, as was done in a baseline survey undertaken before Jamaica's Nutrition Education Programme in 1977. This helped not only in the selection of themes, but also in the exact content and wording of the messages and in the choice of media. Messages went beyond recognizing and stating the problems to acknowledging existing behavioural constraints. An example of this is one of the 45-second spots aired between regular programmes on the country's two radio stations:

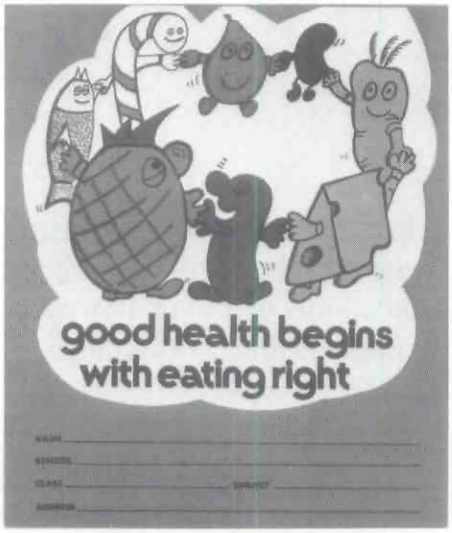
"*Music...*
Soft knock on door.
**Voice:** (gentle) Come in. Oh is you, Gran'ma...come in nuh...
**Gran'ma:** (interrupts) no rush, chile. But tell me something...Is how much longer yu going breastfeed the baby. Yuh tink say this big three-month ole pickney can live on breastmilk alone?
**Voice:** (patiently) Gran'ma...sometimes yu stubborn you know...don't a tell yu a'ready that the nurse at the health centre say that I don't have to give the baby anyting but breastmilk til him is four months old. And look how him look nice and healthy...."

The spot ends with the announcer's voice acclaiming the superiority of breastmilk and reinforcing the message conveyed in the dialogue. The message was both appropriate and relevant in the Jamaican context. The use of "gran'ma" in the extended family system was intended to strike an answering chord in the majority of listeners. The expression of a common belief – that babies *do* need "something other than breastmilk" – highlighted the problem: many mothers in the survey had reported that they gave their babies supplements before four months. Then an alternative action was proposed, reinforced by a shrewd psychological appeal – "an look how him look nice and healthy" – to motivate the listener to adopt the other, more desirable behaviour.

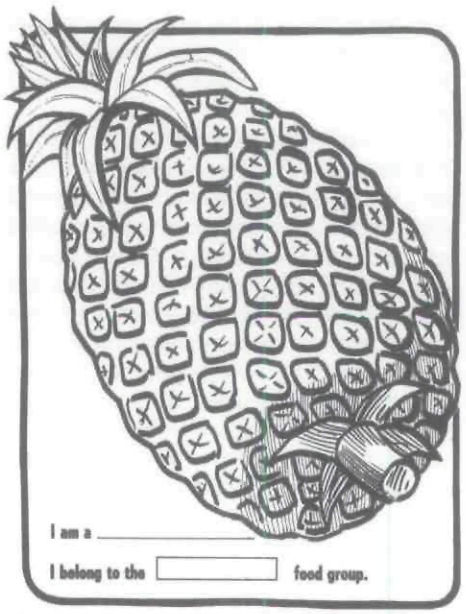
Another interesting aspect of the programme was the decision to use media advertising spots to propel the nutrition message. Research had shown that commercial advertising on radio and TV was a powerful force in changing eating habits, and that 87 per cent of the respondents owned a radio. So radio was chosen as the main medium of message delivery, and an advertising agency was contracted to prepare most of the materials.

## The tricks of the commercial world

Methods used by this agency were the same as used to sell consumer goods, with only slight modifications. Radio and television spots were developed, also radio




*The Jamaican Nutrition Education Programme produces classroom materials to reinforce good eating habits, including exercise and colouring books. (See above, below, and left.)*




dramas and press ads using commercial advertising formulae, to promote breastfeeding and weaning in the ways successfully applied by commercial product manufacturers.

But the success of the advertising component did not mean that the whole effort was an unqualified success. The evaluation did acknowledge the programme to have been well-planned in respect of objectives, educational and promotional activities and media input. But it was also found that no well-defined strategy had been worked out in detail. Consequently, problems arose regarding the exact responsibilities of field workers, and the co-ordination among various segments of the programme. Although interpersonal communications were regarded as important, particularly when dovetailed with promotional activities, some field staff had not been properly briefed about the programme, and so failed to incorporate the messages into their regular teaching.

Lack of adequate transportation facilities, for both community fieldworkers and educational materials, prevented some areas of the country from being exposed to messages, resulting in reduced overall impact. Although messages and materials were prepared and ready for dissemination, the message delivery infrastructure was lacking, causing the programme to achieve only limited success.

## The perverse connection with health education

A comparison of breastfeeding findings in the Barbados National Health and Nutritional Surveys of 1969 and 1981 shows how the lack of comprehensive communication strategy contributed to a dramatic decline in breastfeeding over the 12-year period, despite an increase in health education.

In the 1981 Survey, 91 per cent of mothers in a sample stated that before delivery, they had intended to breastfeed. About 71 per cent claimed that they had been well-informed about and prepared for breastfeeding. Further enquiries revealed that 68 per cent, as compared to only 30 per cent in the earlier survey, believed that colostrum was good for baby, and 85 per cent felt that breastfeeding was best for baby.

However, at three months, only 45 per cent of the mothers were still breastfeeding, and at six months only 17 per cent, compared with 52 per cent in 1969. There was also a 22 per cent increase in the number of babies who were being bottle-fed by one month, and a 30 per cent increase in the number of babies who were completely weaned off the breast by three months of age.

Dr. Frank Ramsey, Director of Barbados' National Nutrition Centre, suggests: "For educational efforts to be more effective, I see a need for more strategies and approaches to be developed in relation to the customs, attitudes and behaviour of these

mothers." He cites "misinformation and misunderstanding" as being responsible for the failure of educational programmes and claims that "breastfeeding faltered at the stage of implementation because the mother was unable to carry out instructions."

Health and nutrition programmes will clearly continue to fail unless communication is made an integral part of the process of change. Successful communication will help ease the transition between old and new ideas, by motivating people to accept change and then giving them the tools and skills to deal with new practices. A search for the most powerful and effective vehicles for communicating messages must exploit all available social and cultural forms.

But it must always be remembered that the mere provision of information is not in itself able to effect behavioural change. The best way to find out if people will respond to messages and media at the behavioural level is to listen to them. This is "participatory communication"—directly involving the audience with any changes which may affect their lives, and letting them express their views.

**Yam and Gungo Peas and Sardine**

4 Tbsp. cooked mashed yam
2 Tbsp. cooked mashed gungo peas
1 Tbsp. sardine (finely mashed)
1 Tbsp. butter, margarine or oil
2 Tsp. soup liquid

Mix yam, gungo peas, soup liquid and butter and rub through strainer with wooden spoon; combine with finely mashed sardine.

*From the nutrition education calendar.*

Too many programmes are handicapped by materials which the people do not understand because they have not been given the opportunity to react to their content, style and format. Pre-testing of all communication messages, materials and media is crucial. Comprehension, attitudes and other perceptions among the audience should be assessed at an early stage of production. The effectiveness of a particular item in changing behaviour will not necessarily be guaranteed, but some of the dangers of misunderstanding and misinterpretation will be reduced.

As long as communication is given a low priority and communication elements are tacked onto a programme or project budget as and after-thought – if included at all – the gap between development programmes and people will never be bridged. □

Pakistan

# Don't just say "salt"...

The sharp contrast between the inefficacy of the conventional one-way communication campaign and the effectiveness of the two-way model was glaringly apparent in the recent efforts in Pakistan to promote the use of iodinated salts in communities suffering from goitre. By DAVID MASON and RAMZAN AZHAR.

Goitre is endemic in the foothills of the Himalayas and the Karakorams; in some sections of the Pakistani valleys of Swat and Chitral, between 70 and 90 per cent of the population suffers from this disease. This debilitating prevalence of goitre is due, quite simply, to the lack of adequate amounts of iodine in the people's nutritional intake.

To counter the problem, the government decided in the mid-70s to promote the use of iodinated salt as the most cost-effective way of getting iodine to the affected population.

The traditional source of salt for the hill populations of Pakistan has long been rock salt, mostly supplied by the world's largest deposits in Punjab. In recent years a crushed salt trade has also developed on the plains, and in many areas today both crushed and rock salt sell side by side. Neither of these natural salts contains any significant amount of iodine, which is more commonly found in salt extracted from the lake or the sea, and the iodinating plant was therefore seen as the answer to the problem. UNICEF participated in the setting up of what was the country's first such plant.

When this goitre control project started production, the services of a commercial advertising agency were employed to launch a promotional campaign to urge the people to use the iodinated salt. But the project was soon floundering: the people weren't buying the new salt, and stocks were piling up at the factory.

*David Mason is currently* UNICEF's *Chief of Communication and Information Service in Islamabad and Ramzan Azhar is* UNICEF's PSC *Officer in Islamabad.*

It was at this stage that UNICEF's Communication and Information Service in Islamabad was called in as consultant physician to look into an ailing campaign. Clinical investigations and the preliminary diagnosis revealed that the project was not getting off the ground because of its poor communication component. The advertising agency's campaign had in fact made the task of getting the iodinated salt accepted *more* difficult.

The reasons were many. At the broad, theoretical level, it was a conventional, one-way communication campaign which assumed that a passive audience would do what it was told. No attempt had been made to involve the people in helping create a framework in which they would be receptive to the ideas which were to benefit them. The "audience" response was therefore one of general scepticism.

At the more concrete level, the designers of the campaign had clearly given insufficient thought to the people's way of life, particularly the communication environment in which they lived. They had—in areas of almost total illiteracy—relied entirely on printed materials: banners, small posters, stickers and handbills. All carried pictures of goitre victims, conveying a negative and distasteful image. And in typical western orientation, all the faces except one were of women. The result was a widespread impression among those who saw the advertising that the salt was a *medicine* for goitre sufferers and that it affected mainly women.

Worse still, the advertising agency, looking for gimmicks, used the colourfully dressed veilless women of the only non-

Muslim tribe in the country for the posters. The result overall was a campaign that very few people at all could be expected to identify with.

That is, if they saw the posters at all in the first place.

## The unseen posters

Because the fact was – as UNICEF rapidly found out – that virtually none of the posters was to be seen in the valley. The remnants were strewn everywhere, but not a single poster of an unveiled woman could be found intact. They had all been stripped from one end of the valley to the other by a conservative Muslim population which thought poorly of women "revealing" themselves in this manner. The campaign had flopped in no uncertain manner.

So UNICEF's task was to begin from scratch and try to project a more hopeful image for the salt, design a pack that would be readily recognized, and promote the salt as a food, not a medicine. And it was decided that radio would be the principal media used to propogate the message.

The first step in the campaign was a rigorous pretesting of all its components, including even the colours used. The face of a smiling boy on a possible packet design, for example, was perceived as showing varying degrees of some infection, depending on the degree of graphic "treatment" given by the designers. Some thought he was merely sick, others that he was a ghost. This design idea was dropped.

Another packet – tried and again quickly discarded – showed a distinctive local man's hat sporting a characteristic flower. This was seen by some to be a stomach, by others as a giant caterpillar accompanied by ants emerging from a tree.

Colour was also a major area which was pretested in order to get the proper "mix" in the graphic element of the campaign. And how much we discovered about life in the mountainous region in asking about colour preferences! For example, one woman was asked what colour she identified with a happy occasion. She replied that, happy or sad, she had only one suit of clothes to wear. Asked what colour she would buy for her husband, she said her husband bought for all, showing who made decisions in the family. But colour preferences were eventually established.

The final packet design showed the mountainous landscape of the valleys. This piece of non-figurative art was acceptable to most of the tradition-bound people and was easily identified by them – especially after a conifer was cut to size so that it was not "bigger than the mountain."

With the packet design approved, it was decided to project it prominently in the campaign. It was used in almost all the printed materials, along with the government insignia (to establish its credentials), the address of the factory and the slogan: "Peshawari salt – prepared under hygienic conditions."

*The original posters showed only women goitre victims (above), which carried a negative image and offended traditional ideas of female modesty. Pleasing pictures of a healthy young man elicited a much better response (below).*


The strategy for the new campaign was to combine education with entertainment. The widespread existence of the goitre problem did not mean that communications had to be approached with a puritanical grimness or that the victims were to be portrayed as if they had no right to enjoy themselves. Entertainment is often the best medium for delivering many messages, and folk stories are the most popular form of entertainment in rural peasant cultures. And since the people of Swat and Chitral are staunch Muslims, it was decided to enhance the folk stories and popular dramas with Quranic verses to carry the messages home. Later, visual media would be used to back up the initial radio campaign.

The promotional materials accompanying the radio were: two calenders, both trilingual, one carrying a Quranic injunction, the other the packet design; a cartoon booklet in simple language for school-children; a question-and-answer booklet for opinion-leaders such as religious leaders, school teachers, etc; point-of-sale buntings featuring the packet design; hanging mobiles for retail outlets; self-adhesive stickers in every packet, 16 of which made up a shortened version of the cartoon story; and handbills-cum-posters repeating one of the calendar designs.

The tri-lingual (Urdu, Pushto and Chitrali) calendar poster carried a verse from the Quran: "So how can you deny the blessings of Allah." This was aimed at the mosques, which also serve as community centres. An added advantage of the Quranic verse was that it lent the poster a sanctity and prestige that would discourage most people from tearing it down.

The campaign won the crucial support of the Imams, thanks to the religious component, and now they are enthusiastically spreading the message. They are effective public opinion-leaders in every village and have a big following.

An illustrated information booklet was also produced for opinion leaders and change agents like the Imams, teachers, councillors, and health staff. The cover has a happy male face, also used in other promotional material. On the back is the pack design. Photographs of people, places and the processing plant are included, as well as one showing a goitre sufferer (conspicuously enough, but without any attempt to show the malady as being repulsive).

So well-conceived and executed was this booklet that it quickly became, beyond the campaign's most earnest hopes, an animated topic of discussion at community centres, mosques, hujras (where men collect to chat) and health centres.

*All the promotional material carried the message: "Good salt, good health. Don't just say 'salt', ask for Peshawari salt."* Photo: Azhar

For dealers, sale depots and retail shops, two kinds of bunting and the hanging mobile depict a happy male face of the area with the message: "Good salt, good health. Don't just say salt—ask for Peshawari salt and add taste to your curry." These buntings and mobiles are a good source of attention, and have an attraction for village retailers who can display them in their otherwise sparsely decorated shops.

## Interesting the school-children

School-children are amongst the few literate or semi-literate people in these valleys. It was therefore decided to make use of them as carriers of the change message while meeting at the same time their need for simple reading materials. A folk tale of the area was adapted for a three-colour cartoon booklet, "Nan Doshi's story." A school teacher tells the story of two sisters. Nan Doshi, a beautiful young girl, dies suddenly on her marriage day. Her younger sister Doshi, who has goitre, is secretly adorned to take the place of the bride. The drama heightens when the bridegroom refuses to take her hand and accuses the parents of cheating. When the girl's father shows the groom the dead body of Nan Doshi and explains that he did not want to send him away empty-handed, the bridegroom recognizes that no deception was intended and accepts Doshi.

Then the teacher answers the question of his students. What is this goitre? How can it be prevented? How does it develop? What are its harmful effects? How do you use Peshawari salt, and where is it available? The answers to these questions—which in effect constituted the campaign's message—spread fast through the children.

The cartoon story, drawn in indigenous style, went through several changes before it was found acceptable. Extraneous background detail was reduced to a minimum, since much of it was misinterpreted or distractive. Everyday details such as door-posts could not be recognized unless shown in their entirety. The backs of the children in the teacher's class were often seen to be rocks or sacks, so the children were turned round to face the reader. And so on.

In the development of the campaign on the radio, jingles were produced in local languages with folk tunes. However, during pretesting it was found that people did not like them, and in song form the message did not come across clearly. So they were dropped altogether and four radio spots were instead produced in dramatic form.

The first phase of field evaluation gave results that were quite encouraging. Eighty per cent of people had heard of Peshawari salt; 70 per cent had heard the radio messages; 80 per cent of those who had listened to the radio could recall at least three basic messages correctly: "Use Peshawari salt." "It is good for health." "It protects from goitre."

Sixty per cent of those who had heard the radio spot reported a "goitre" discussion after the programme. Clearly, awareness of the problem had been dramatically aroused.

The printed material was creating an interest through school-children, point-of-sale buntings and the Quranic calendars. On the advice of their peers people were giving iodinated salt a trial. They were finally buying and using Peshawari salt, evidence of a successful communication campaign resting on a better foundation than a city-designed creation of an out-of-reach advertising agency. □

Brazil

# Telling the mothers: "you *can* breastfeed!"

Brazil's National Breastfeeding Programme is one of the largest launched anywhere, and has made major innovations in its communication component. A notable achievement has been the free provision of communication resources from a private sector which had been persuaded of the national importance of the exercise. By GERSON DA CUNHA.

When the World Health Assembly (WHA) enacted the Code on Breastmilk Substitutes in May, 1981, the acclamation was thunderous and world-wide. A major step had been taken in the promotion of breastfeeding which in turn would substantially reduce child mortality and ensure healthier infants and children.

But many voices, especially from countries which are running vigorous breastfeeding programmes, were quick to point out that the cheering was perhaps premature. The WHA Code, they said, was only one element in the comprehensive programme required to counter early termination of breastfeeding. Expecting too much from the Code could in fact be counter-productive because it could engender complacency in the struggle.

An earlier Geneva meeting—the Joint WHO/UNICEF meeting on Young Child Feeding in October 1979—had already indicated the Code would only be one component of any effective breastfeeding programme. All such programmes must comprise at least four elements, the meeting had urged: information for, and motivation of, mothers, health professionals and decision-makers; modification of some public health/hospital systems; provision of facilities for women in the community and especially at places of work; action vis-a-vis all groups responsible for commercial marketing practices that hurt breastfeeding (i.e. the Code). To omit any one of these essential programme components and still expect the programme to succeed would be like leaving out one rib in a barrel, and hoping that the strength of the rest would enable the barrel to hold the water.

The Brazilian Government took the 1979 meeting's recommendations quite seriously. Its Ministry of Health launched in March 1981 the National Breastfeeding Programme, in which UNICEF co-operates, with precisely the kinds of emphases the Geneva meeting had envisaged. The programme goal is to increase the prevalence and duration of breastfeeding: exclusive breastfeeding for four to six months, and breastfeeding with supplementation for as long as possible thereafter. The programme is also meant to cover education of vulnerable groups on proper nutrition of the pregnant/nursing mother and the weaning child.

In addition to its comprehensive sweep, the programme will be considered "concluded" only when all programme elements have been absorbed into normal health, education and social welfare systems. It would be the intervention that became a movement that became a routine. To oversee implementation, a National Commission and commissions in all Brazilian states have been established.

The launch began with a series of radio and TV spots on Brazilian government time worth about U.S. $3 million. Systematic bench-marks of breastfeeting practices were established in two metropolitan areas through studies using a sample of 600 mothers (a matching study in 1984 will evaluate results up to that point). Some 30,000 health workers were exposed to breastfeeding training. Once this base had been secured, TV and Radio commercials were re-started in three major cities, covering 90 per cent of the programme's target group: mothers in the lowest income strata.

Amongst other programme initiatives, rooming-in has been introduced in some seven of the 26 states. In three others, breastfeeding has become a subject in primary and secondary school curricula, and is a subject in medical/paramedical curricula in seven states. And on the legal side, work has begun to re-fashion legislation relevant to breastfeeding and the working woman.

One of the programme's more intriguing and important components was communication. Important because communication was an essential tool in its success, its operation ranging from its use as a prime agent—in motivation and instruction, for instance—to its humbler task of the provision of information. But it was intriguing also, because it was virtually a virgin field, very sparsely worked and written up. A great deal of the work therefore had to be started from square one—and where indeed was even that?

Whichever way the communication instruments were used, there was little confusion about what they needed to achieve. It was clearly not going to be communication merely for information's sake, telling the family that they could have their children vaccinated on September 20, for example. Nor was the aim instruction alone: "For health and strength, your family's meals must contain..." The crucial information task in a breastfeeding programme is *nothing less than convincing those addressed to change behaviour in a fundamental aspect of their lives.* And the target is not just mothers, but hospital administrators, doctors, nurses, policy makers, planners, etc. To accomplish such a goal, to create a message powerful and pervasive enough to elicit a behavioural response, is no simple task.

*Gerson da Cunha is Communications and Information Officer in* UNICEF's *Brasilia office.*

The first step in designing this message was establishing the target group. Through systematic research, we sought out and spoke to those we wanted to reach in order to determine what our target mothers felt about breastfeeding and what barriers existed to prolonging the practice. Two studies were conducted.

## The depth interview

The first of these was qualitative, involving no more than 30 carefully selected mothers, with children under 10 months of age, and all from the most economically deprived groups. Half the sample had jobs outside the home. The in-depth, unstructured interviews lasted between one and four hours each, and were conducted by specialists.

The picture that emerged was something like this: all the women had a near ideal image of breastfeeding and the prolonged practice of it. Initial difficulties with nursing arose from psychological problems (inadequacy, rejection by child, husband, family, etc.) and a lack of information about breastfeeding. These difficulties tended to heighten their insecurity and anxiety – which can inhibit milk flow and thus aggravate the original difficulty in a vicious circle. It also emerged that the mother got little help from the doctor of the family. So a perfect predisposition to bottlefeeding was created – and the substitute was not long in arriving, almost invariably on an indifferent doctor's advice. Breastfeeding stopped very early in the infancy.

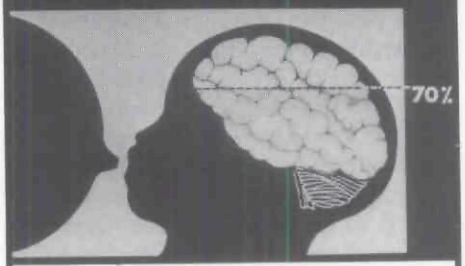
The research recommendation for message design was that the *idyllic* aspects of breastfeeding – that breast milk means "love, nutrition and protection" for the baby – should not be harped upon. Such emphasis could seriously dismay a mother having routine problems with breastfeeding by arousing in her intense anxiety about her potential inability to provide "love, nutrition and protection." A message extolling breastfeeding could therefore actually contribute to sharpening normal anxiety and consequently diminish the mother's all-important lactation reflexes.

What was needed was reassurance for the mother. She had to be encouraged to believe that "you *can*!", that there was no such thing as "weak milk" and that a woman, as a mother, had value and "the power." It was equally important that our communications pass on information about breastfeeding techniques.

To our surprise, then, we discovered there was going to be more to the programme message than the simple injunction to breastfeed, or the pithy "Breast is Best!" (Anyway, neither formula was an encouragement *to breastfeed more months*, which is really our goal since virtually all our targeted mothers did breastfeed in early infancy). These basic findings were later borne out by a quantitative study in a southern and a northeastern city, using a sample of 600 mothers and 300 health professionals.

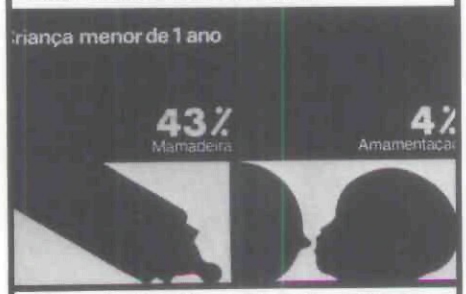
**The pictures and graphics below and on the facing page are from an audio-visual first shown to top Brazilian health and social welfare decision-makers in mid-1980. It elicited their immediate support for the idea of a pro breastfeeding campaign. The audio-visual is now used in teaching and health institutions, and among community leaders. The captions are from the script.**

"95% of the deaths among Brazilian babies aged 6 to 11 months were among children breast-fed for less than 6 months."




"Malnourishment in embryo or in the newborn child can cause irreversible mental deficiencies."

"With the breast-fed infant, sickness is rare, death exceptional. Premature bottle-feeding leads to malnutrition and death."




"Take a family of four with the lowest income. Bottlefeeding a child under one year would cost 43% of the family income; breastfeeding, 4%."

The groundwork was now laid for message design, and even more: a basic programme posture began to take shape. It would involve everything from training materials to the approach, say, to legislators, doctors and the media. The decline in breastfeeding was not due to mothers opting for convenience, or fearing the breasts would sag, or caring less for their babies than "in the old days." It was due to their being frustrated by structures external to themselves and as well by concerns deep within them. For neither could society disown responsibility.

So the manual for community supervisors in government's adult literacy programme, or the flipchart for health attendants both are careful to say, "Beware of making a mother feel tense about nursing her baby, or guilty if, for some reason, she has problems." Doctors, too, are getting the message. And the press is beginning to be familiar with the idea that father, family and community are all responsible in successful or failed lactation. The mother is not in this alone, and the newspaper cuttings show it.

## A new line in an old bottle

Historically, breast-milk substitutes manufacturers have used the media heavily to advertise their products to mothers and doctors, but no comparable promotion reminds mothers and their physicians of the benefits of breastfeeding. The programme set out to change all that, and the help of the mass media and professionals in this highly specialized field was sought and is now actually an integral part of the programme.

Given the central role that the mass media plays in determining attitudes, this incorporation was inescapable. Behavioural change in specified groups is known to be associated, among other things, with their repeated exposure to a persuasive message. Only the media provides this possibility on the massive scale necessary. The interpersonal channels to the mother are clogged by ignorance and negative attitudes: the media can enable us to leap-frog to her a positive,

scientific message.

So a leading Brazilian advertising agency entered the scene. It had volunteered its in-house professional services at no charge to the programme. Based on the research evidence and their previous experience, they came up with two alternative approaches: one said, *Toda mãe pode! Insista!* (Every mother can! Stay with it!) and the other, *Amamentação: Seis meses que valem uma vida*! (Breastfeeding: the six months that are worth a lifetime!). Both were submitted to a pre-test, using a free-group discussion method and a sample of 50 target group housewives.

The concensus was that a combination of both approaches was probably superior to either one on its own. So the mass media "message" is, in fact, this: TV/Radio commercials (30 seconds each) present the realities of breastfeeding – but through leading figures such as women TV and film personalities, the captain of the World Cup football team, a leading doctor, etc. These well-known faces urge the mother to persist in the breastfeeding effort, as they themselves or the women in their families do or have done. The pay-off is always "...six months worth a lifetime!" All other material reflects this stance.

One interesting outcome of the pre-test was the idea of using billboards. "It has come to the point," said a mother in group discussion, "where we are shy about breastfeeding in public. Why don't you put up a big poster, out on the streets, showing a barebreasted woman breastfeeding? It would give us all heart."

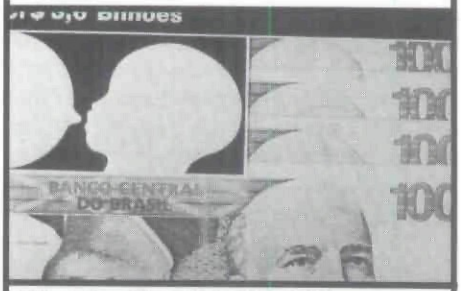
That is precisely what has begun to happen. In the coming months, one thousand 32-sheet posters, printed free, will go up on donated sites. The operation would cost a commercial advertiser well over US$50,000. It has cost the Ministry nothing.

## Getting it for free

The whole matter of communication resources is another major programme achievement. For instance, free time has been offered the programme sponsors for two years in three high priority cities (total population: 14 million) over Brazil's leading TV/Radio network. Between August and October last year alone, the value of such time topped US$50,000. Mass media materials with a conventional market price of some US$150,000 have been created for little more than a fifth of that. In other words, the Ministry of Health's initiative has found a substantial public echo even from groups normally interested only in profit-motivated activities.


"Breastmilk could account for a quarter of the total milk production of a country like Brazil."


"Brazilian mothers could realize 300 million litres of milk annually if they breast-fed their babies to six months. Current practices lose 180 million."




"The value of the milk lost is 3.6 billion cruzeros but the total loss is double because the consumer must pay for formula instead."

"We're talking about a waste of US $150 million annually, equal to the total budget of the national breastfeeding and nutrition programme."


"When the child is exclusively breast-fed on demand, the hormonal activity inhibits ovulation."

But, in the end, the effect of TV and booklets and posters must be clinched by the human touch. Otherwise behaviour simply fails to change, as a rule. Brazil's National Breastfeeding Programme dealt with this aspect by strengthening and upgrading the contact with mothers in health centres and hospitals, and by building up community-level interaction.

It is in the latter area that Brazil has come up with some characteristic answers. For instance, in the northeastern State of Ceará, a specially written piece of *literatura de cordel* is being sung. Literally "cord literature" from the way the lyrics are sold, strung out on cords, it is chanted by a *repentista* at street corners. The breastfeeding piece (which can last 30 minutes) says among many other things:

> *"This nonsense of milk*
> *that's salty, weak or dries up*
> *—never believe it! Trust*
> *your doctor who knows*
> *your milk is rich and tasty,*
> *the fountain of your love."*

The Government's Brazilian Legion of Assistance (LBA) and its vast network helping children and mothers has taken on the responsibility of more organized community contact. A central force of trainers has been prepared which has trained others, each of whom, in turn, look after six or more mothers' groups. The content of the three-tier process is determined by LBA, the State Health Secretariat and La Leche League. A newsletter has begun to be published within this club movement.

It may still be too early to speak of results, or even of reliable feedback. The action front is enormous and as dynamic as a samba. There is no telling where the rhythm of things will take us. The real evaluation check is planned for 1984.

But intermediate objectives are being steadily achieved. The programme no longer has to work at getting press notice, or institutional cooperation where there used to be none. In the Federal District, a leading hospital reports a 20 per cent increase in mean duration of breastfeeding among mothers it tracks after delivery. Rooming-in, creches at worksites, the attitude to breastfeeding among obstetricians... if all these are indicative signs, then Brazil has made major inroads not only in the effort to prolong breastfeeding but in devising new ways to get the message across. □

# Villagers teaching us to teach them

Handing the camera over to non-literate village women to photograph familiar village activities yielded interesting discoveries about the way rural people see things, and how they learn.

By JOHN SICELOFF.

The photographer squints through the viewfinder, then motions to the woman holding the baby to dunk it in the bath. The baby shrieks. "Click!"

The scene might evoke familiar memories. But here in this Tanzanian village, there is a difference: the subject is a village woman, and so is the photographer. But even more novel than the scene was the assignment the photographer had undertaken: she was taking pictures of a familiar village activity of her own choosing in order to use the result to teach others how that activity could most easily and economically be performed.

The use of graphic illustrations in communicating ideas about development has been extensively researched. The central purpose of much of this research has been to understand how non-literate rural people respond to visual aids such as drawings, photographs, slide sets, and posters. My goal was similarly to enhance that understanding but to do so in a manner that gave the people themselves virtual control of the material that had to be produced and assessed. So I decided to hand over the tool—the camera—to the villagers so that they could film their own activity. Their choice of perspective, "editing," and the subject "frame" would, I felt, yield significant indications of the way they perceived things visually.

Over a two-year period in Peru and then Tanzania, two hundred delegated villagers co-operated enthusiastically in the exercise. Each learned how to use an instant picture camera, then took and explained their picture series on how to hoe, to harvest, to cook, to feed the baby, and many other everyday activities. And it became apparent very quickly how invaluable a tool in village education pictures can be. Again and again I saw photographs spark the interest of villagers and provide them with detailed images of both familiar and unfamiliar things and places.

In the process I learnt a great deal about the effective use of picture series amongst villagers, especially women, and as well about why villagers were sometimes left confused about the overall story or message of the pictures and films made by "experts." Particularly confusing have been "how-to" films designed to communicate new skills in essential activities. So putting the camera in the hands of villagers was a move back to the basics, to find out how villagers related to their own productive work on the visual plane.

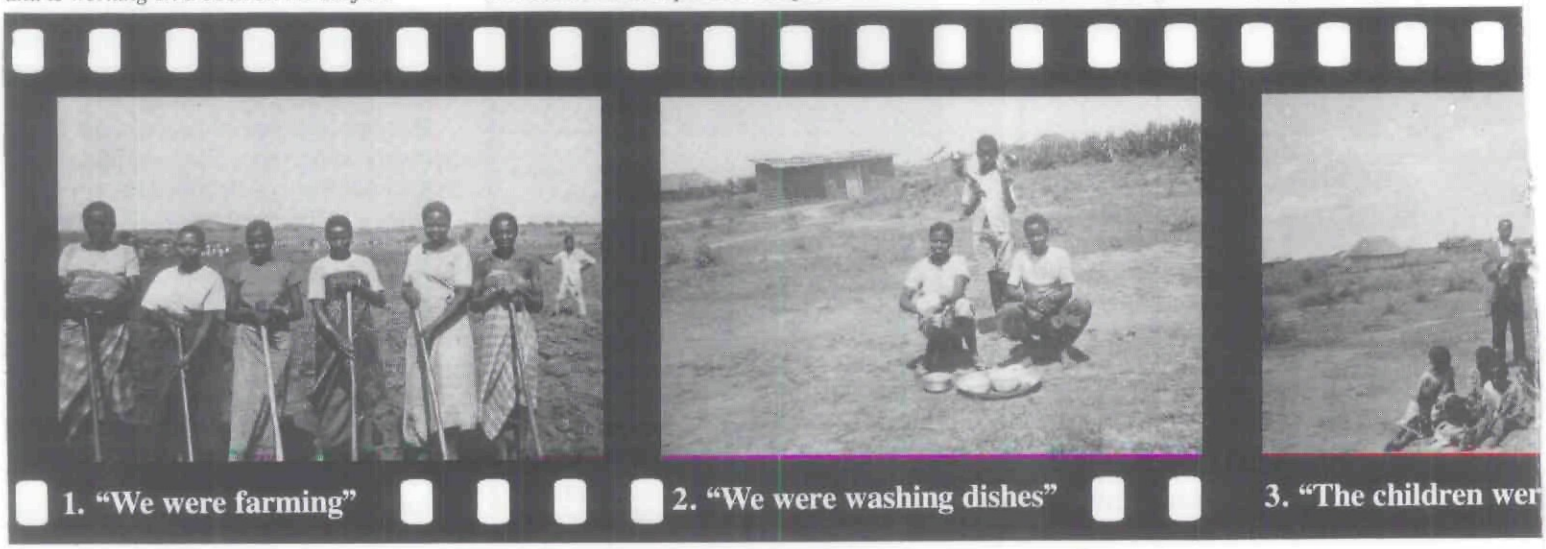
The picture series taken by the villagers could be roughly grouped into two categories. In the first group, the emphasis was on the action; each step was shown in a separate picture. The photographers in this grouping were mostly men. And they were men who lived in villages near major roads, or in shanty-towns near urban centres.

Pictures taken by women, and by men in more isolated villages, were very different. Their pictures emphasized people doing the

*John Siceloff has worked in communications and development in Afghanistan, Peru and Tanzania, and is working on a book on the subject.*

### *Her own picture series*

*These pictures were taken by Kabula Njoba, a woman living in Ngeme village, Tanzania. Mrs. Njoba has never been to school, and has seen movies twice. Her subject was: "Farming", and her conception is broad, encompassing not only cultivation but eating and celebration. Each picture has been elaborately planned to show several related activities. Picture No. 5: "They were cooking", shows a woman bringing firewood, another holding a water-jug, another stirring, and another with a pot over the fire.*



1. "We were farming"

2. "We were washing dishes"

3. "The children wer

work, not each step of how the work was performed. Large blocks of activity were often shown in a single picture.

These photographers conceived of a "how-to" picture series in a very broad sense. They showed people travelling to work, working, resting, and often drinking. The emphasis was on "how *we* work," not a step-by-step presentation of an activity. It was a style of communicating with pictures that was descriptive, personal and "whole," reflecting how villagers taught and learned from one another in their daily lives.

## "Why-to" and not just "How-to"

This provided insight into what kind of picture series would be needed to introduce new ideas into village areas. For men in the first grouping, conventional "how-to" pictures, with each step shown in a separate picture, were likely to work. But for nearly all village women, and for men in isolated villages, picture series would need to follow certain guidelines:

– The narration, or written description, that accompanied the pictures would be very important. Pictures in themselves would convey little without highlighting what was seen in the image and why it was important.

– A picture series could not be expected to teach villagers how to perform a specific activity. This could only be done by someone on the spot. "How-to" picture series were unlikely to work.

– Picture series could be very successful in encouraging villagers to adopt new ideas, ranging from improved cropping techniques to better diets for babies. Instead of a "how-to" series, these would be "why-to" pictures.

– A "why-to" picture series would need to be presented in a descriptive, person-to-person, style.

– The picture series would need to present experience, not merely information. This would mean showing something which actually happened in a village and worked.

I struggled with different ways to carry out these guidelines. I found it was difficult to script a picture series that would speak on a person-to-person basis to villagers. The problem was the enormous gap between the actual situation of villagers and my own situation – or indeed that of any highly-trained communications worker living in an urban centre.

Eventually, I found the best way was to involve villagers directly in the planning and production of picture series.

My method was to choose a village where a development idea had been successfully applied, and then to select a group of villagers and ask them to tell with pictures why they had adopted the idea. They planned the story-line and composed the pictures; I shot them. The narration was written jointly and recorded by the villagers. The final product became a testimonial from one village group to other village groups on why they adopted a particular idea, ranging from ox-ploughs to sanitary latrines.

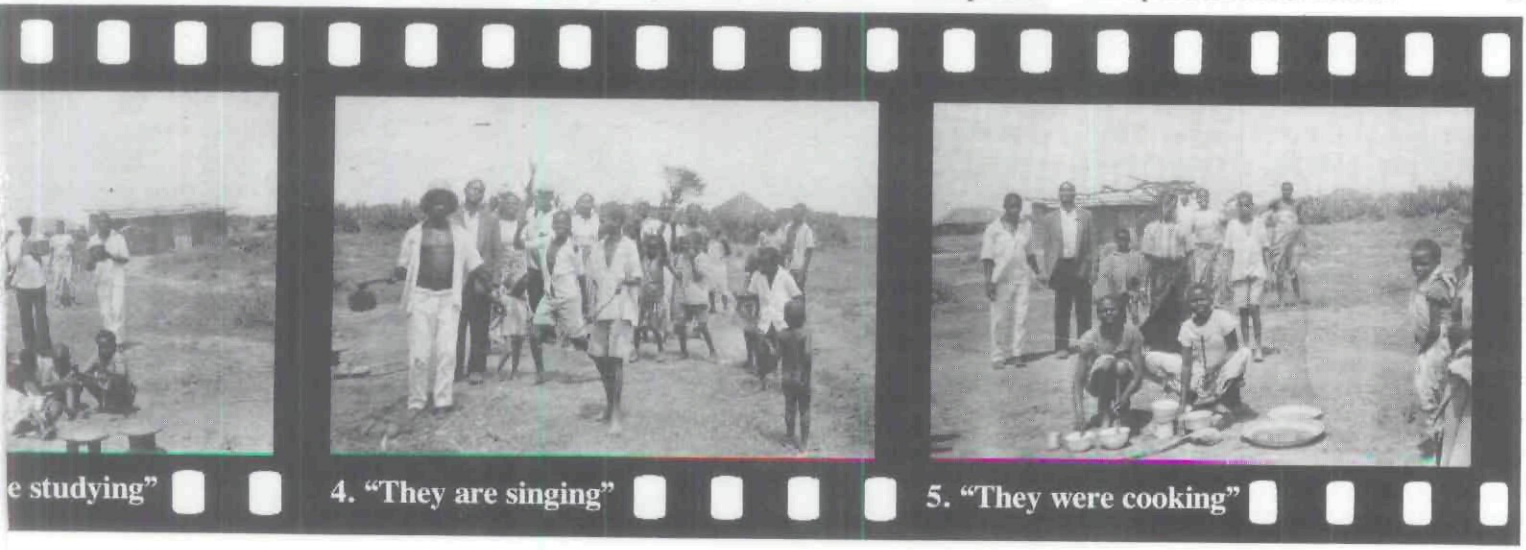
The final step was to create an effective method of using picture series in villages. I settled on a slide series with a recorded narration as a format. I then designed a means of distribution which depended on the villagers themselves. This was an audio-visual kit which can be carried on the back of a bicycle and includes a 12-volt projector and a cassette recorder, both powered by generators fitted to the bicycle. It requires no petrol and no batteries. The advantage of this small kit is that it can be left in the village for weeks at a time. A village worker, paid on a part-time basis, can show the picture and answer questions. Many small showings can be scheduled at times which are convenient for the people in the village.

## Reporting on concrete results

As a result of producing these picture series with villagers, I found that I also developed a new attitude toward the role of communication workers in development. I began to see specialists in development communications primarily as journalists, not producers. The first requirement of a successful picture series, I found, was a successful village project on which to base it.

This would mean, for instance, that to educate village women about a balanced diet, the first step would be to find a village where this has actually happened. This might be a village where a co-operative had started to raise chickens and a group of women had planted beans. Should a setback have occurred, such as the treasurer running off with the money, this would also be portrayed in the picture series, along with the remedial action taken. The essential characteristic of the village selected for the series would be that the results of the project were visible. Picture series for villagers are effective only if they are based on actual occurrences, not merely on advocacy or promotion.

What this means is that communications workers must be effective journalists if they are to be effective educators. Before snapping the first picture or drawing the first storyboard, they must be able to see how a project is operating in the field. Only then will they be able to make audio-visual or other aids which present concrete, realistic options likely to motivate villagers to reassess their own practices in favour of more productive alternatives. □



e studying"

4. "They are singing"

5. "They were cooking"

# Dear home doctor, help me please

On the tea plantations, a new radio programme in Tamil is becoming one of the most listened-to shows on the air. With entertainment, tips and remedies, it is helping people tune into a healthier, more nutritious family life. By CAROL ALOYSIUS.

The time is 1.30 p.m. The venue: a single-roomed "line" home of a plantation labourer working on one of Sri Lanka's many up-country tea gardens.

A family of eight including mother, father, married daughter and son-in-law squat on the bare floor listening attentively to a tiny transistor radio turned up full blast.

It is hot at this hour of the day, especially when eight people have to occupy one little room with a tin roof. So the family prefers to sit outside on the common verandah shared with a dozen other families. Soon they are joined by a few neighbours who cannot afford to buy a radio, and they all crowd around the pocket transistor to listen.

The voice of the announcer suddenly cuts across an interlude of music as he introduces "*Suha Valvu*," the Tamil programme on "Comfortable healthy living" which is currently the most popular radio programme listened to by Sri Lanka's Tamil-speaking population.

The theme for the day—usually related to a topical event such as a religious festival—is announced, before the most important and popular part of the programme—"Your Home Doctor"—begins. There is hushed silence in the little group on the verandah as the home doctor comes on.

Dr. K. Indra Kumar applies himself wholeheartedly to the task of answering the questions, sent on postcards, over the air. Each one receives a thorough discussion in simple language.

"My son aged seven fainted twice on his way to school this week. My husband says this is due to weakness. We can't afford to buy expensive tonics. What can I do?" This question is typical.

Yes, indeed, what can she do? For malnutrition is a common problem among these very underprivileged plantation workers. Their women and children have the highest rate of mortality and the highest incidence of acute and chronic malnutrition in the country, according to a 1976 survey. This survey proved that there was a grave need for nutrition programmes in plantation areas and hence polyclinics with maternal and child care services were launched with UNICEF co-operation.

The radio doctor naturally urges this

*A family outside their single-roomed "line" home on a tea plantation. The commonest diseases among children: diarrhoea, worm infestations, malnutrition.* UNICEF/Sri Lanka

*Carol Aloysius is a Sri Lankan journalist and broadcaster who specializes in social development subjects.*

mother to take her child to one of these polyclinics and have him medically examined. He also suggests some nutritious but inexpensive meals for her child.

Next is a question from a mother of four. Her question has nothing directly to do with health, but is nevertheless answered by the doctor. "My old mother who used to look after my two younger children of one and three years recently died. Since I am out of the house working as a tea plucker, along with my husband and two elder sons, there is no-one to look after the children. The neighbour to whom I entrusted my children is too busy managing her own. What can I do? P.S. Right now they are down with bad colds and coughs by getting wet in the rain during my absence. Help me please!"

The very plantation this mother works on has a model creche – although she did not know of it apparently. It is run by Janatha Estates Development Board and was recently improved and equipped with UNICEF assistance. So the radio doctor's first piece of advice to the mother was to enrol her children at the creche where they would be looked after by trained attendants, taught creative games, given a medical examination and any treatment needed at the polyclinic, and regularly washed, fed and played with until their mother returned in the evening to collect them.

"There are a number of such creches in various plantations which have been given extra facilities by the UNICEF organization. Try to make use of these facilities, for they are free of charge and at your doorstep," Dr. Kumar advised his listeners.

## Each problem is different

No stranger to the problems of the plantation sector, Dr. Indra Kumar, who is a writer and broadcaster as well, feels that however similar the problem of one mother is to that of another, each must be examined carefully and the solution offered must relate to her immediate living conditions. The remedies he suggests are usually simple, inexpensive and readily available. "Home remedies are the best remedies for people who cannot afford to visit a doctor," he says. "So if a child has a cold or cough I usually suggest coriander and salt water gargle, advising the mother to keep her child indoors and not exposed to the cold weather. Only if the case is really serious do I advise a medical examination."

What are the commonest ailments among the plantation children? Diarrhoea, worm infestations, malnutrition, coughs and colds, scabies, asthma, epilepsy, eye infections and tetanus.

"All these diseases can be cured at home with the right medication," he says. What is more, they can be prevented – if the parents are properly educated. Take the case of worm infestation which is extremely common. Careful washing of the hands after going to the toilet, thorough washing after a motion and cutting of the child's fingernails – which really amounts to basic hygiene and cleanliness – can often prevent infection. Cleanliness in food handling and avoiding eating raw salads unless properly washed (using human excreta for manure is common in the villages and plantations) also helps.

Questions are often raised about infectious diseases like whooping cough and diphtheria. Then the doctor informs his listeners of the immunization programmes carried out with UNICEF co-operation at each health centre. "Don't forget to obtain immunization cards and see that your baby gets the triple vaccine in its correct dosage and at the correct time," he stresses.

A topic that is increasingly becoming a subject of discussion over the radio is breastfeeding. In the letters received by the radio doctor a very large number of requests now come from mothers-to-be and new mothers. "Is breast-milk really the best milk for my baby? I have been told so by our creche attendant who looks after my baby during my absence from home. But I want to know your opinion," is the kind of question becoming increasingly frequent due to a new awareness created by the government's ongoing campaign to promote breastfeeding, aided by several non-governmental organizations and UNICEF.

A mother-to-be, looking forward to breastfeeding her baby expected in a couple of weeks from now, asks: "Can a woman with small breasts, produce enough milk for her baby?" A new mother worried and upset that her milk had suddenly dried up writes tearfully: "I don't have any more milk in my breasts, I can't afford to buy artificial milk food and my baby has got used to breast-milk. What can I do to increase the flow of milk? Is there any medicine I can take? The doctor advises her to stop worrying and take a more nutritious diet drinking plenty of hot fluids. "With the right diet your milk will return again," he assures her.

The diet of a pregnant woman is another popular subject. Questions like "Should I avoid eating fried foods?" "Should I stop eating sour fruits?" "Do I have to drink a lot of milk to be able to breastfeed my baby?", are some of the commonest.

## Difficult subjects come out in the open

Another important topic which is being increasingly touched on these radio series is family planning. A subject which was once discussed in hushed whispers behind closed doors, is now openly talked about even among the most conservative-minded women in the plantations.

"The most important thing about these programmes is the trust and confidence we have won from our large listening population in the different parts of the country," says the man behind these programmes, Mr. Kavaloor Rajadurai who combines the roles of writer, translator, film-maker and broadcaster. He quotes the instance of a young woman who wrote under a false identity. "My husband suspects I am having an affair with another man and wants to make sure that the baby is really his. Can a blood test really prove paternity?" The question was answered in an indirect manner without disclosing the woman's identity. She then wrote to the radio doctor: "Your advice has

relieved my mind a great deal," adding: "I am giving you my real name. I trust you will not reveal it to anyone."

The "*Suha Valvu*" radio programme is only three months old at present but its popularity increases daily. This is because its versatile producer has managed to pack into it items which are specially appealing to the plantation audience. Tamil dramas, and music from the latest Tamil films feature prominently. The theme of health and sanitation is introduced indirectly, since otherwise he feels the target audience is bound to lose interest. More often than not, he resorts to introducing his message on health linked with a current event. For example, when the *Deepavali* festival (Festival of Lights) was celebrated recently, it was discussed on this programme and in the course of the discussion, tips were given. "Don't waste money buying imported food to serve your guests. Make your own sweetmeats – they are tastier and cheaper," they were advised.

In the Sri Lankan context, especially among the vast and largely illiterate population of plantation workers the radio has several advantages over the newspaper, its nearest rival. The radio overcomes the barrier of illiteracy, and has the potential of reaching the remotest and the largest number of people simultaneously. There are four million radio owners in Sri Lanka among a population of 15 million, which proves that buying a radio is no major problem even for the underprivileged in Sri Lanka, who place a high priority on the one luxury item which provides their main form of entertainment.

Not only will the programme's scope be widened, it will become increasingly a programme *by* the target community, and *of* the target community. "I hope" the producer says, "to get more participation by the plantation workers. I have decided to invite the workers themselves to write short radio dramas (not more than eight to ten minutes) on problems concerning them and related to incidents in their day-to-day lives. I also intend introducing actual dialogues between plantation workers and our radio doctor, and hold a few cookery classes on radio giving the plantation women recipes on how to make cheap nutritious dishes with readily available vegetables grown in their own gardens."

"*Suha Valvu*" is undoubtedly a step in the right direction. Hopefully, the objectives it seeks to realize will soon transform the lives of the hundreds of underprivileged plantation workers in Sri Lanka. □

India

# A clean and sparkling message

**Throughout the training sessions for village handpump caretakers in Andhra Pradesh, the message at the heart of the water supplies programme – that handpump water is clean and safe to drink – is constantly repeated. But putting this message across to the villagers is the hardest part of the caretaker's job. By MAGGIE BLACK.**

The open well in the poorer quarter of Bilalpur village has an air of abandonment. Forty feet or so beneath the cracked masonry at the well's rim, the water's surface is disturbed by a thin flotsam of twigs and refuse. According to Sri Laxman, the village schoolmaster and local handpump caretaker, the only women who still lower their buckets into its unappealing depths come from the four or five families whose houses are right nearby.

All the other women in the village now take their brass pots to the handpump three hundred yards away, where a few easy strokes of the pump-handle produce a flow of water which is, by comparison, sparkling and clean. "If I show the way," says Sri Laxman, "they will follow. My own family lives by the open well and every morning I ask my wife, or I myself, take the bucket and go to the handpump."

This handpump, of the India Mark-II variety, is one of 8,500 such pumps recently introduced into "problem" villages throughout the state of Andhra Pradesh. Since the pump was installed in Bilalpur village three years ago it has never broken down. This, in the opinion of Sri Laxman, is a tribute to the strength of the pump. "It is a good pump, a strong pump," he says. "Look at my record card." And to prove his point he takes from its plastic wrapping his handpump log sheet, as empty of entries as it was over two years ago when it was issued to him.

The sturdiness of the India Mark-II handpump, developed with UNICEF assistance and now formally approved by the Indian government as the most suitable deepwell pump for village use, deserves a large part of the credit for the three-year repair-free honeymoon. In the old days the type of pump invariably installed was an old-fashioned cast-iron pump designed for use in the rural Western world by a single farmstead. Its advantage was its low cost. But its disadvantage was that under the pressure of use by the two or three hundred families living in an Indian village, it broke down with monotonous regularity.

UNICEF had for many years been closely involved in an attempt to improve the health of mothers and children in rural India by improving both the quality and quantity of village water supplies. But a countrywide programme to drill boreholes in 150,000 "problem" villages quickly became an exercise in drilling holes in the ground and little else. Eighty-five per cent of the pumps went out of action almost as soon as the drilling engineers left the neighbourhood.

The design of the Mark-II handpump – its heavy duty steel frame, the easy action of the piston, the child-proof spout and reinforced handle – are crucial to its trouble free use. But no technological device, however "appropriate," can go on functioning without proper care and attention. The lack of entries in Sri Laxman's log sheet owes more than he admits to his regular weekly ministrations.

## The backbone of the maintenance system

Sri Laxman and hundreds of other village handpump caretakers form the backbone of the new three-tier maintenance system whose establishment is a key feature of the Andhra Pradesh village water supplies programme. The caretakers act as do-it-yourself maintenance men, keeping the pumps in the village in working order.

Should a pump break down, the caretaker acts as a link with the next tier in the maintenance system. He has a supply of already addressed and stamped postcards which he puts in the mail to summon the block engineer. The block engineer will then call in the district mobile maintenance team if a major repair is necessary.

Every week Sri Laxman services the pump, tightens and greases all the nuts and bolts, takes off the pumphead to remove any stones that have collected inside and check the action of the chain. He receives no remuneration for his part-time job. His only reward is the certificate he received at the end of his two-day training, his kit of spanners, and the modest sense of satisfaction which officialdom's recognition of his role confers on him.

Like the other 94 participants who attended the two-day work camp for handpump caretakers, his name was selected by the water department officials from a list submitted by the village council. This selection process is part of a conscious effort to involve the village in the new pump's installation and operation. The breakdown rate of the past owed a lot to the absence of any sense of community involvement.

Engineers are not trained as social workers. They have a tendency to concentrate on the mechanics of their job, and once having installed or repaired a pump, they get into their landrover and drive away. This gives the villagers the impression that the pump belongs, not to the community, but to the engineers. If it then breaks down, they go back to using the open well in the vague expectation that the engineers will come back and mend "their" pump some day.

Apart from his maintenance duties, the village handpump caretaker is expected to act as an informal public health official. Dirt and refuse must be swept away from the pump's concrete plinth, and water must not be allowed to accumulate around the base where it might seep contaminatingly into the ground. There is a small channel to drain off excess water into a soakpit a few yards away, which must be kept free-flowing.

*"Every week, Sri Laxman uses the spanners given him after his caretaker's training to tighten the nuts on the Bilalpur handpump."* ICEF 9299/Nagarajan

## The "clean and safe water" message

Sri Laxman, as he was taught at the training work camp, has tried to put across to the village women the simple message at the heart of the village water supplies programme, that handpump water is clean and safe to drink, and everything must be done to keep it that way. He has tried to encourage the women to join him in sweeping and cleaning the pump base.

In this unpredictable human context, his efforts have not been entirely successful. The menfolk of Bilalpur stoutly protest that open well water is just as good as handpump water. Until the women have themselves noticed improved health among their children, and have made the mental connection – which could take many years – they will probably remain sceptical. This is why it is essential to maintain the pump in working order. Otherwise there is no chance that the habits and attitudes of several lifetimes can be definitively changed.

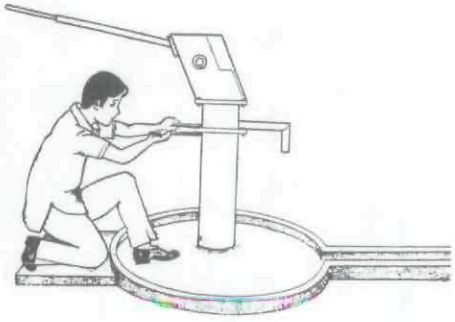
In the meantime the women are content with the handpump for other reasons: they have more water for all purposes in the household, and they obtain it with far less

*Continued on page 27*

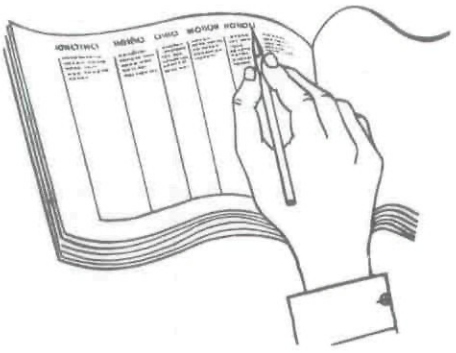
*These illustrations are from the training materials for the village handpump caretakers prepared by* UNICEF *The caretakers fill in the text, and use the flipchart as a manual.*

## TEXT FOR FLIPCHART

**FOR HAND-PUMP CARETAKER TRAINING**



**Are flange-bolts tight ?**



**Maintain the hand-pump log sheet.**

# They thought one shot was surely enough

The Expanded Programme of Immunization was launched in the Philippines some years ago. But village captains told the mothers "Don't bother with those vaccines." There was something badly wrong with the programme's communications. By MARY ANN MAGLIPON.

The midwife with her vaccine carrier walked back into her rural health clinic, panting hard. Obviously exhausted, she sat down and sighed.

"I'm so tired. I went from door-to-door. My lips are cracked from the heat and all that talking I did." She told her woes with a certain pride, hoping perhaps for sympathy and praise.

If so, she was disappointed. Instead she heard a piece of Mrs. Zaraspe's mind. "What? You went from house-to-house to do immunization? That's a waste of effort! Ah. You must be one of those who have not yet attended our communications workshop."

Mrs. Rosario Zaraspe, who was undertaking her usual clinic rounds, is the Operations Officer of the Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI). She's worked with the Ministry of Health for years. In another one or two years, she is eligible for retirement. But she is just as energetic as if her whole working life was ahead of her. Daily, she plunges into her work, visiting the villages, checking on vaccine supplies.

The Ministry of Health, with the assistance of UNICEF and WHO, launched the EPI in 1976. A network was established to ensure that most – if not all – mothers and children could be protected against the communicable diseases: tuberculosis, diphtheria, tetanus, pertusis, poliomyelitis and measles. Plans and necessary support for field health workers and clinics were provided.

Two years later, a team reviewed the programme and found that there were aspects which needed strengthening.

*Mary Ann Maglipon is* UNICEF'S *information officer in Manila.*

It seemed that traditional leaders in the villages believed there was no need for the vaccines. They never had these in their time, and yet they are still alive and healthy. They told the young mothers: "Don't bother with those vaccines."

The mothers who did bring their children for the first dosage of DTP did not come back for the second. Some thought one was surely enough. Others felt that the nurses and midwives were not encouraging. When they asked what the shots were for, most health workers merely said: "They are medicines. Good for your baby."

*Local health workers in San Pablo plan the schedule for the visits of the immunization team. Mothers now come forward with enthusiasm.* Photo: B. Seitz

Mrs. Zaraspe's own experiences confirmed this finding. She once asked a mother who was stepping out of the health unit why the baby was given a shot. The mother answered vaguely: "Cholera."

## The communications workshop

To solve these problems of misunderstanding and lack of motivation, a five-day communications workshop was developed, which the health workers can attend as part of their EPI training.

There are six "modules." The first explains in detail the six immunizable diseases, and illustrates techniques for giving the vaccines. Module two deals with the process of communication, centering on types of media and tips in preparing visual aids. Another module concentrates on the qualities that make a good EPI communicator such as credibility, friendliness and empathy. Others present the importance of community support and methods of motivating community participation; the use of the interview as an instrument in gathering data; and how to develop a communication plan for EPI to suit a particular community.

Mrs. Zaraspe is very interested in the communications part of the programme, and has been noticing the difference it has made to mothers' and health workers' enthusiasm for EPI.

On one of her field visits, she drops by at San Pablo City, an hour's drive from Manila. She's heard that progress on immunization in San Pablo has been exceptional. In 1980, only 21 per cent of the mothers and children were immunized. Today, only a handful

PROFILE

have not been reached by the city's health workers.

According to the city health nurse of San Pablo, the success could be pinned to the many participants of the communications workshop series which was held there. During the fourth day of each of the workshops, the nurses and midwives have their practicum. They go out to the field – reaching the remotest communities of San Pablo. They talk to the community leaders, convincing them of the necessity of having children immunized. Today, San Pablo maintains a record of 93 per cent immunization coverage among the mothers and children in the city.

"I guess it's easy now. We've already established good contacts with the village captains. They know that this immunization programme is for their children. Besides, the city mayor's information officer helps us. He announces our schedule for giving vaccines during his radio programme."

This is how it works in San Pablo. The 17 midwives assigned to the 153,000 people have come up with a strategy. They post the date of their village visit on their health unit's bulletin board. The schedule is also forwarded to the city information officer for his radio programme. Three days before the village visit, a midwife is assigned to remind the village captain. When the midwives come as scheduled, the mothers are already there with their children. Sometimes, it is the local mothers' group who gets the mothers and children together. Oftentimes, however, it is the village captain who anxiously gathers the patients in time for the immunization.

Mrs. Zaraspe is very pleased with the way things are going in San Pablo. "Ever since we started these communications workshops, we've reached more mothers and children. You see, in the five day live-in seminar, we explain the nature of the diseases to the health workers. Most important, we share with them the practical skills of a motivator. We show them how to plan communication strategies for EPI. This way, the leaders of the village along with mothers know why we go out there wielding our needles."

The success of the communications workshops with the health workers is not the only important aspect. The real success is that now the mothers willingly come for the vaccines. When you talk to a mother and she calmly states that she brought her child for immunization against DTP, polio, measles, and not against cholera, then you can tell that the message is really getting through.

*Continued from page 25*

physical effort than winding a bucket laboriously up the well-shaft.

The village handpump caretaker training programme in Andhra Pradesh grew out of an earlier experimental programme in the state of Tamil Nadu, which had been set up with UNICEF assistance and encouragement. In the past five years, UNICEF has been building on this experience to develop a comprehensive training programme which will equip village caretakers for their role within the three-tier maintenance system. Eventually, it is hoped, this will be applied on a country-wide basis.

The exercise has demanded the dethronement of the engineer as the sole arbiter and problem-solver in the business of providing villages with clean water supplies. This is parallel to the demystication of the role or white-coated doctors in the context of primary health care services.

The Mark-II handpump, properly looked after, could mean a revolution in village health standards. The handpump caretakers are among the only agents at village level capable of short-cutting the long route which must normally be travelled before new ideas and attitudes take firm root. Since their training is very brief, and can only occasionally be supplemented by refresher courses, and since they are not remunerated, their training programme must contain a high degree of motivational content.

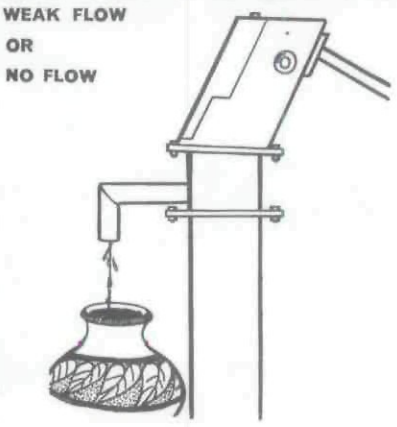
## School-teachers are not mechanics

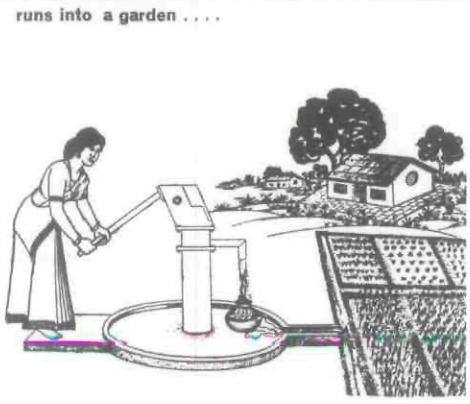
The training materials, which were developed largely by UNICEF water project officer Raymond Janssens, needed to take account of the vast number of languages and dialects used throughout the Indian continent. It was also necessary to bear in mind that the whole idea of village handpump caretakers is a novel one, and that their trainers would themselves initially be very at sea when confronted by a group of stall-keepers and school-teachers instead of by the familiar class of engineering students aspiring to become master drillers.

the materials include, therefore, a trainer's guide to the training kit, whose centrepiece is a large Caretaker Master Flipchart. Some pages have pictures, and some are blank; the trainer follows a small model flipchart with both text and illustrations in English, which he translates into the local language and writes onto the Master Flipchart. The Master Flipchart is set up on an easel, and painstakingly explained, page by page to the group of 30 or 40 participants.

Each village caretaker is given his own Trainee Flipchart and as the training progresses, the caretaker writes into his own copy the translated text and the diagram captions from the Master Flipchart under the trainer's supervision. This flipchart is his to keep, evidence of his ability to participate in a learning process, which to many may itself be a difficult and unfamiliar experience. It will also serve as his manual and guide in the future.

Not all the handpump caretakers who graduated from the work camp attended by Sri Laxman are as meticulous as he is in the weilding of his spanners. Not all are men of some age and authority already in their villages, whose example will command an automatic following, or whose admonitions to the women will be heeded. But gradually the combined effect of a working handpump and spotless surroundings will begin to have an effect. Over the longer term, the investment of time and energy in training village handpump caretakers like Sri Laxman will make real the air of abandonment at the Bilalpur well. Eventually the masonry will crumble and the water silt up, because the villagers have fully accepted the handpump revolution just three hundred yards away. □



# They can't see the point

The idea of "visual literacy" has become much in vogue in recent years in development circles since educators and communicators first began to realize that villagers didn't see what they were supposed to see. But not enough attention has really been paid to the problem. By GEORGE McBEAN.

The Rendille are a nomadic people who herd camels in a remote and arid area of Northern Kenya. Virtually undisturbed by the appurtenances of the modern world, their tribal economy and way of life revolves entirely around their animals. Their food is the milk, blood and occasional meat which careful husbanding of the herds produces. Their tools are those culled and fashioned from the sparse vegetation of the desert. Their only clothes are the skins, beads and ornaments which to them denote dress and decency.

East Africa in the past two decades has been the scene of many an experiment in rural people's visual interpretation. Working in the villages to introduce notions of health and hygiene, new farming techniques and improvements in livestock rearing, educators found that many of the films, charts and visual aids with which they sought to put across new ideas were greeted with blank incomprehension, or worse.

The Rendille provide a classic illustration of the problem. They had never seen posters of any kind before Dr. D. Wiseman arrived with his mobile clinic, in an attempt to provide the people with rudimentary health services. Confronted by a group of mothers clad only in the dust of the desert, Wiseman showed them a picture of a black American mother taking a shower. The Rendille did not respond in the slightest, although the mother was "dressed" exactly as they were.

Fascinated by the Rendille people's capacity – or lack of it – to "read" pictures, David Wiseman showed them a picture of a mosquito enlarged several hundred times, and was surprised to find that they recognized it as the aircraft of the Flying Doctor Service. Next he showed them a photo of a cow with the background removed, and was again surprised by the interpretation that this was a picture of a particular breed of cow in Iceland. Believing now that the Rendille were more "visually literate" than he had originally thought, Wiseman again showed the picture of the black American mother showering. Their reaction this time was to run over to a urinating camel and wash their heads.

*George McBean is a graphic artist working with* UNICEF, *until recently in Eastern Africa and now in Nepal.*

*Initially, the Rendille women did not respond to pictures with much comprehension. Now visually attuned, flash cards are used by health workers to teach hygiene.* Photo: Wiseman

## The idea of "visual literacy"

Visual literacy – an aspect of literacy often ignored until Wiseman and others began to draw attention to it – is often an important first step towards gaining other literacy skills. By "visual literacy" is meant the individual's capacity to extract information from a photo or illustration. The famous expression: "One picture is worth a thousand words" is only true if people have the perceptual abilities to absorb a thousand words' worth of knowledge from the picture.

For most Westerners the memory of learning visual perception is lost in the obscurity of childhood, and their daily absorption of visual knowledge continues to be largely unconscious. Few are aware, for instance, that their capacity to understand many subjects comes mainly from constant

exposure to television, films, and book or magazine pictures.

With this reservoir of knowledge learned subconsciously from visual stimuli, the capacity to learn from words as well as pictures is also strengthened. The feat of imagination required from people like the Rendille when first confronted with images of things outside their physical experience takes place automatically.

In the homesteads and villages of Africa there are virtually no pictures to look at. The research that has been done in East Africa shows that in rural areas, where the bulk of the population lives, visual literacy levels are low. Due to lack of exposure to visuals and any form of education connected with interpreting them, people have difficulty in understanding pictures, and may even fail to realize that there is anything to understand.

Individuals who are taught to read pictures gain confidence that they can learn from them, and have more interest in searching out information. Evidence suggests that visual education may also help illiterate people understand the advantages of an organized information exchange, as well as perhaps providing an incentive to learn how to read and write. However, while educated mothers in Nairobi sit with their children, looking at picture books, and saying: "Look at the way the girl washes her hands," rural mothers have no such opportunities. Neither the materials nor the traditions exist to support such activities.

It is clear that, if useful messages are to get across to the rural audience, there is a great need for appropriate teaching aids to help educators pass on information. Yet it has not become obvious to governments and development agencies that the work of artists and illustrators is essential to the production of teaching materials. Such technicians are often paid approximately the same amount as a driver. Their status is low and they are given virtually no training. Consequently, any artist with common sense moves on from the drawing board after a short time to take up a more lucrative position and leaves in his place the young and inexperienced. Sadly, at any given time, there is little talent to do these important jobs in development communications.

In the semi-commercial world, however, there is some recognition that pictures speak louder than words, and that their entertainment value is a useful vehicle for development messages.

*Orbit*, for example is a colourful children's magazine with a circulation of about 28,000 in Zambia, and a probable readership of three times that number. Researchers have found a definite improvement in visual literacy among children coming into contact with the comic. In particular, the "Spot the Difference" item, in which readers are required to identify discrepancies between two almost identical drawings, has been singled out for helping to improve visual understanding.


*When a visual experienced person looks at line drawing A, he automatically reads into the picture enough to make him perceive something closer to B. When a visually illiterate person looks at A, he sees something more like C. From a Kenyan study quoted in* ***Applied Communications****, Fugelsang, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 1973.*

## Taking their problems too seriously

But when it comes to the more conventional context of development programmes devised in government and aid agency offices, there is a conspicuous lack of imagination and creativity. "Perhaps the villagers' problems are taken too seriously," says one Kenyan literacy education expert, Peter Kariuki. "It doesn't seem serious enough, the idea of flooding rural areas with pictures books, cartoon strip comics, puppet shows and drama performances. There is no funding for such things, yet these are the things that attract the most attention."

Meanwhile back in the city there is great interest in the new wave of video equipment. Town-based communicators scramble over catalogues in the hope that technology will step in and solve their communications problems. However, many believe that unless a little of the millions of dollars being spent on this media is channelled into creative software (attractive programmes) and into the education of rural people in visual perception, video may suffer a similar fate as many films in the village. Rural audiences with a low visual literacy level are often unable to understand any messages in the teaching films thay have been shown.

As experts in Washington and elsewhere look at satellite pictures of Africa, they may well be able to spot some fertile soil down in the Rift Valley. They may even be able to tell what the maize crop is like this year. For the farmer whose land they view with such intensity there is little hope that he will be able to increase his crop or protect his family from illness and malnutrition unless he learns a little more about how to deal with his problems – problems which a little imaginative effort might help him resolve.

He doesn't need a multi-media show with fade-ins, dissolves, and a stereo track. He needs simple direct messages conveyed to him through media that he can comprehend and relate to. Or else, like the Rendille, he will treat the message with amused and even disgusted disdain. □

# The village voice

When people out in the villages write and produce their own newspapers and radio shows, their voices can become a powerful means of expression and a force for development. Two reports from rural Africa: AHMED RAJAB and ATHANASE GAHUNGU.

"There is a lot we can write about to encourage dialogue and development," says Arthur Changawa, the editor of *Sauti ya Pwani* (Voice of the Coast), one of the three rural newspapers recently established in Kenya with UNESCO assistance.

"We can beat even the national radio because our readers believe that the newspaper has been brought to their place to deal with their own issues." This particular venture is newly established, but rural newspapers have in fact had a long, if chequered, history in Kenya, dating back to the end of the Second World War. But what differentiates the new rural newspapers from their predecessors is the conceptual framework under which they operate.

The Kenya Rural Press Extension Project has been in existence since 1980, when the first of the three newspapers – *Sauti ya Kericho* (Voice of Kericho) – was born. Kericho district, situated in the highlands to the west of Nairobi, the capital, is the main tea-producing area in the country. Because of its fertility it is comparatively highly populated by Kenyan standards, a characteristic of both the other areas where rural newspapers were subsequently started: Kwale district in Coast Province, and Kisii in Western Kenya, which is one of the most densely populated districts in the country.

*Sauti ya Kwale* began publication in 1980, but in April 1982 the newspaper was expanded to cover all the rural districts in Coast Province, and changed its name to *Sauti ya Pwani* (Voice of the Coast). *Sauti ya Gusii*, named for the Gusii people who inhabit Kisii district, began publication in September 1981.

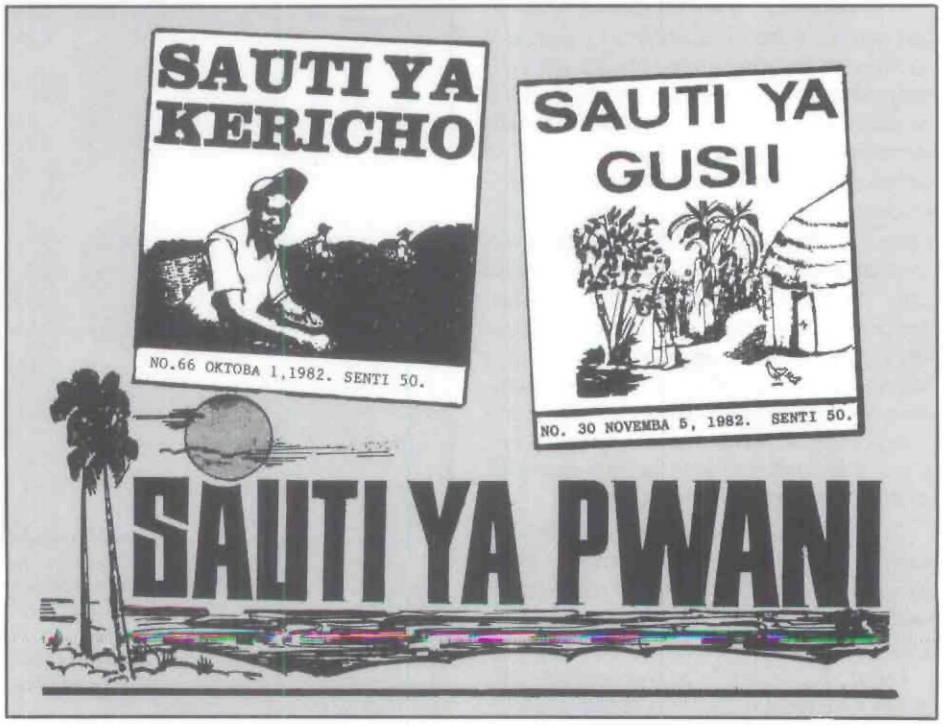
The original purpose in developing a rural press was the retention of literacy skills, using development-oriented materials. But as the project developed, new possibilities emerged for using the rural press in the whole development process. The newspapers are now being used to encourage dialogue between the people and development agents, to promote adult education and literacy, and to express the people's aspirations and the government's programmes. In addition, the rural press is playing a role in the creation of a new information and communication order at the national level.

The papers' editorials play a leadership role by stimulating thinking and analyzing trends that require review. In their role as crusaders on behalf of their readers, the newspapers have managed to raise issues concerning the day-to-day quality of life of their audiences.

*Sauti ya Gusii*, to take but one example, has highlighted the problem of water shortages, the dirty state of roads in Kisii town, and poor examination results in the district. In almost all cases, the authorities concerned have responded by rectifying the anomalies or by offering plausible explanations as to why things are as they are.

## No pressure

"It was surprising to learn that the papers have not experienced any pressure from the Ministry of Information as to their political




*Ahmed Rajab is a Zanzibari journalist and broadcaster currently working for* UNESCO. *Athanase Gahungu is a correspondent for* ***Le Monde****.*

course, nor received political 'guidance' from the provincial government authorities. Neither have Members of Parliament used this new and tempting tool for public relations in their constituencies," observes Wolfram Fromlett, a media expert engaged in an evaluation of the project.

The target audiences for the papers are primary school leavers with seven years of education, new literates, women and rural leaders, including chiefs, agricultural assistants, health assistants, and school teachers. The three newspapers, printed on offset machines, are published every two weeks in Kiswahili and sell at 50 Kenyan cents per copy. Articles and news items are written not only by trained journalists but sometimes even by the drivers, translators, and printers on the staff of the newspapers.

All the personnel for the papers are permanent employees of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting which is anxious to involve people who not only originate from the local areas, but who also have a feel for rural life. Efforts are currently being made to encourage readers of the newspapers especially school children and women's groups members, to become local reporters.

The impact of the papers can be judged by visiting the local areas and talking to people at random. "News on agricultural activities creates positive competition. The paper helps us in our efforts. I now know, for example, where I can get the medicine for my cattle," says a farmer at Mariakani in the Coast Province. "I began to know of activities in different areas and this was helping me in competition for development," admits the local chief at Mariakani.

Organizations such as FAO and UNICEF have seen the potential role that the rural press can play as partners in development. Recently UNICEF provided expertise in a UNESCO organized workshop for editors and selected reporters. A result was a feature article in a recent issue of *Sauti ya Pwani* entitled *Titi La Mama Ni Tamu* (A Mother's Breast Is Sweet) on the advantages of breast-feeding.

The aim of the Kenyan government is eventually to create enough rural newspapers to cater for all the 51 districts in the country. With the emphasis now placed in Kenya on the decentralization of development activities to the district level, the rural newspapers will play a vital role, providing a forum for the discussion of issues between those who are trying to bring about development, and the people those efforts are meant to uplift. □

# Upper Volta

## *Radio rurale*

by Athanase Gahungu.

A rural radio programme, especially when produced – as this one was – by an international team, can become a cause for celebration. It releases Africa's boundless capacity for rejoicing, its acceptance of all peoples, and its desire for self-expression.

Balolé is some 60 kilometres from Ouagadougou, the capital of Upper Volta. Fields of millet dotted with trees and bushes stretch all round. The village is an island in the flat plain that bears its name.

Like the ceremonial rapping of the staff at the theatre, the festivities begin to the sound of a tom-tom. The rural radio team makes its entrance. It is an unusual team, made up of trainees studying in Ouagadougou under the *Ecole Internationale de Bordeaux* – a programme of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation. They come from Canada, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Niger, Togo, Guinea, and, of course, Upper Volta. It's a Tower of Babel, but interpreters are on hand. And all the trainees, in their respective countries, have become attuned to the rural temperament.

Everything begins with festivities. Young people, women and children dance for the guests. The elders bear traditional weapons on their shoulders: the war-club, the cudgel, the hatchet. A local prince arrives, preceded by a servant solemnly bearing an antique blunderbuss. Before the places of honour, women bow respectfully as they offer up the local beverage, "zom-zom" – crushed millet in water with a lump of vegetable oil, sweetened with sugarcane – which has now replaced termite honey. Then, more dancing, and millet beer. But there are also light beer and lemonade: Balolé is no stranger to modern ways. And the festivities continue throughout the recordings for the programme.

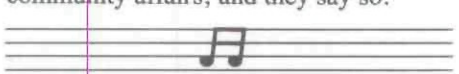
These start with Balolé's history – or its legend. A prince from the area of Koudougou (about 100 kilometres from Ouagadougou), driven out by his rivals, was seeking asylum. He and the last of his followers stopped to rest beneath a tree. The prince's horse, left nearby, broke his tether and fled across the savanna. The prince's friends found him near a village whose inhabitants were without a chief. The prince settled there and protected these ill-treated outcasts. This meeting between a prince without a people and a people without a prince made Balolé a haven of peace.

Through successive interviews, a picture emerges of what life in the village is like. The villagers soon forget the microphone and plunge into their stories. Old Africa is ever-present in this secluded hamlet. Fowl are sacrificed to bring rain, to begin the sowing, and to greet the harvest. The forest-snake is a revered creature. If one crosses your path, it is bad luck. If the serpent is old, it foreshadows the death of an elder. If one is killed when it is young, a young person will die in retribution.

The greatest taboo is adultery: those found guilty are driven from the village. Polygamy? It increases the family, replies a villager. Monogamy? Only if the wife has a pleasant disposition. Formerly, marriages were arranged by the husband's father. Today, young people make their own choices – not without some consternation among the parents, who see it as a form of liberation for the girls.

Childbirth is still the business of traditional midwives, but medicine has changed: witch doctors are growing scarce. And death? A final journey, says one old man.

Do people leave Balolé? Less and less, replies a young man. He has been to the Ivory Coast three times, but he has come home to stay. Formerly, young men who didn't venture out were seen as faint-hearted and could not find a wife. But people realized that the migrant's gains were illusory. Life "over there" was costly and did not allow one to save. So now, more young people are staying on and working with the family. They are eager to be consulted about community affairs, and they say so.



One after another, the villagers offer explanations and anecdotes – about millet, sorghum, and ground-nut planting, livestock breeding, and how a sudden drought can bring to naught their efforts for food self-sufficiency. But Balolé goes on telling its tale, amid singing and dancing, until the sun goes down. □

# What kind of message are we putting across?

One of the most persistent questions development workers ask themselves is whether the message they are preaching is getting through to the people they are working for. Not much attention is paid, however, to whether people in the developed world properly understand what life in the Third World is like. By JOHN MADELEY.

The British have an abiding faith in education and its ability to uplift people's lives, so that a frequent question at public lectures on development issues is: "Don't you think we should do more to educate these people in the developing countries?"

The obvious insult – the implication that "we" in the West have all the answers and the Third World needs to be told about them – is obviously unintentional, but it is symptomatic of a deeper problem that exists in Britain and other western countries. Despite the coverage and the talk about development issues, people of these nations have a woefully distorted view of what life in the Third World is like. Most continue to believe that people there are generally wallowing in gutters, close to the edge of starvation – and waiting for outside aid or education to inject new hope into their lives.

Clearly, the message is not getting through. The image of developing nations as being incompetent and totally dependent on outside help is pervasive enough to pose major obstacles on the road to global co-operation. If one group of people has an inferior image about another, then there is little chance of building a constructive relationship. As North-South issues are likely to assume critical importance in the face of intensifying world tensions, getting the correct message through is of no small importance.

Part of the difficulty in getting the message through is the manner in which the ordinary person learns about the Third World. The newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and films through which most people pick up their ideas of the rest of the world generally only report violence, sudden political changes and socio-economic problems in the developing world, thereby reinforcing earlier colonial prejudices about the inferiority of "subject races." Advertisements in the media appealing for funds following natural disasters or human atrocities also inadvertently project the image of a non-self-sufficient, non-self-reliant and basically violent Third World.

*John Madeley is a journalist specializing in development issues.*

## Poverty and the UFOs

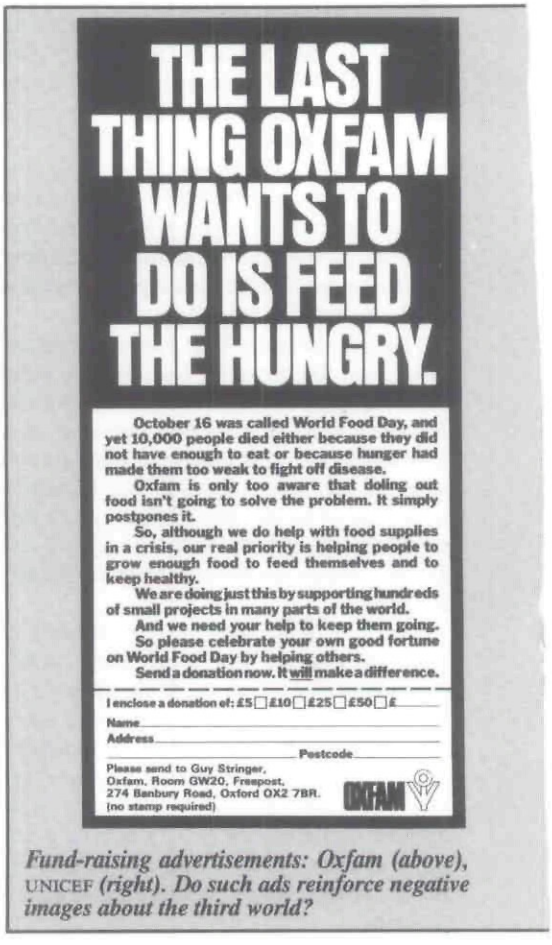
In fact, so minimal is the general understanding of the world that a 1977 survey by the research organization Schlackmans on British attitudes towards overseas development discovered that of those interviewed: "As many thought that the Third World had something to do with UFO's and space travel as thought it had to do with poverty."

But even amongst those whom one would consider well-informed and concerned, the perception of their relationship with the Third World is "one way." *They* have something to offer; but they are too little aware that they can receive something valuable *from* the people of the developing world. The links that irrevocably bind the South and the North never seem very clear. For example, few people in Britain are aware that most of their food comes, one way or another, from the Third World. Even fewer know that the standard of living they enjoy is a consequence in part of the rock-bottom prices the developing countries are earning for their commodities.

So the concept of interdependence, and of the Third World's desire for a recognition of this and of a more equal partnership in the exploiting and sharing of the world's resources, remains a secret to the average Briton.

Ironically, some of the very organizations which are committed to promoting the ideals of harmony and equality of the world's people contribute unintentionally to the problem. To raise funds, it helps if they communicate something of the Third World's suffering – but that also reinforces the negative images.

Derek Walker, Director of the London-based Centre for World Development Education, says that aid agencies are aware




*Fund-raising advertisements: Oxfam (above), UNICEF (right). Do such ads reinforce negative images about the third world?*

that to ask for help builds up the image in the public's mind of a dependence relationship. Oxfam's Appeals Manager, Sam Clarke, says that his organization tries to undo any initial misconceptions created in any appeals drive by discussing the whole development issue with supporters through their mailing programme, so that they become better informed.

But does Third World suffering always need to be stressed? The Belgian Organisation, Centre Nationale du Co-opération au Développement, an umbrella group for several overseas aid agencies, seems to raise money successfully with messages about development which give a well-rounded picture of Third World communities. The co-ordinator of one European aid group, which has members in all West European countries, places Belgium and Holland at the top of the European list of populations that have a reasonably balanced view of the Third World, and respond well to informative advertising, thanks in no small part to the quality of this advertising.

These two countries apart, he feels that the situation in the rest of Western Europe is rather similar to Britain's. Awareness in the Scandanavian countries is probably marginally better than in Britain, but in France and West Germany it is about the same or even worse.

The picture, however, is not all bleak. "Small sectors of well-informed people, with a reasonably well-balanced view of the Third World, have grown bigger in recent years in Britain, especially in the churches," says Derek Walker. "Among young people too there is a much higher level of knowledge than there used to be."

A futher "seed of hope" is that part of the media in Britain is becoming aware of the distortion of the Third World message and has started to make a determined effort to correct it. Television programmes especially have taken up this challenge, a factor of some importance as most people glean their information from this medium.

An example of good communication recently seen on British television screens is a six-part programme called "Two Way Ticket," written by Sarah Hobson. Children from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Mauritania, Norway, Peru and the Scottish Hebrides showed British viewers the kind of life they lead, and the series made a remarkable impact. It is not often people in Britain get the chance to see Third World people—children in this case—as they really live.

## An alternative account of 1981

Another television programme to make an impact in Britain was a two-hour documentary, shown the day before New Year's eve 1981, called "Global Report." This was billed as an "alternative account of 1981." Made with the help of UNICEF and the *New Internationalist* magazine, the film told the story of 1981 through the eyes of five people in different developing countries. The impact made by the film can be judged by the fact that the programme was jointly awarded the United Nations Association (UK section) Media Peace Prize, which is awarded annually to the person, programme or association, that does most in the media "to contribute best to international understanding and harmony."

A further hope for an improved image getting across in Britain is the start of the new television channel 4, which will feature programmes for an organization called the International Broadcasting Trust. This has been jointly established by aid agencies to help communicate Third World issues. Its first three programmes will enable people in Kenya and Mozambique to talk about their lives. The next three programmes will focus on the Caribbean.

"The picture that people in Britain often have of the Third World is one of a place where things always go wrong," says IBT General-Secretary, Hugh Bayley. "We hope that our programmes will help to contribute to a better understanding."

The message that is struggling to get across in Britain is one of the people in the developing world striving, often against enormous odds, to get on top of their problems, wanting the western world to understand those problems first, and give financial help second, should it come as a result of the increased understanding. If people in the West can see more of the process of development, they are more likely to respond. The response may come by way of giving money, or it may come through questioning the structure of commodity trade, of international financial arrangements, or of the profits of multinational companies, which all contribute to depriving these countries of a fair share of income.

1983 is World Communication Year. It badly needs to be a year which marks the start of a new era in communicating the correct Third World picture to the West. Only if an accurate message comes across is there any hope of developing a genuine global community. □

PICTURE YOURSELF IN CHINA

# Run to Big Andy

By ANTHONY STEIN

Photo: Stein

When 41 teenagers got back to school this fall, they had a lot to write about in their "What did you do on your summer vacation" essays. They had spent the month of July as the American representatives to the first Sino-American summer camp. The camp took place in Beijing and the small sea-coast resort of Beidaihe in the People's Republic of China. The month-long learning and living experience was shared by the Americans with 30 Chinese youngsters.

The first reaction to China for most of the American campers was surprise. "It's so different from the China they teach us about in school," commented Lynn Silver from Pennsylvania. "I had a picture in my mind of everyone in Mao suits, you know, dull dark colours, everyone the same. But it's not that way at all."

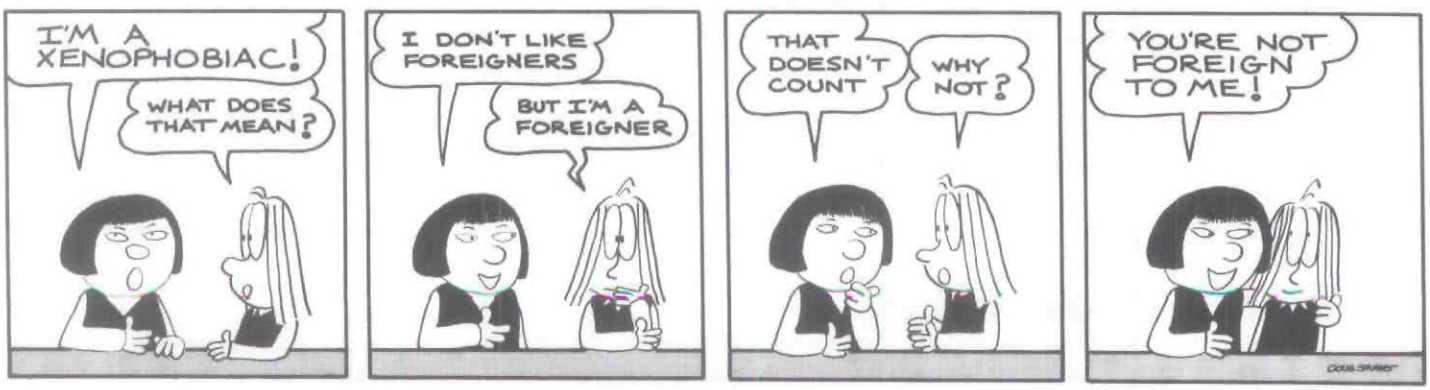
Sam Klepper, an upstate New Yorker, says that the experience has made him want to study both Chinese language and history. As he put it, "I was shocked by what I didn't know."

There was surprise, too, at the freedom the campers were given. By the end of the month, many had explored the small streets and back alleys of the two cities they had visited. "Exploring by ourselves was the best thing," Tina Gitlin recalled. Her interest was photography. "We got to see things by ourselves we never could in the large group – the houses, the little children." Judy Hirsch, a Canadian who joined the trip, remembered a neat little pastry shop that was kept so clean "the owner handled money with a tweezers."

A few of the youngsters were invited into the homes of people they met along the way. One of the lucky boys described the simple house of a Chinese working family as quite a contrast from the magnificent sight-seeing spots everyone saw as tourists. There were just two separate rooms, one for the husband and wife, the other for the grandparents and children. The floor was of earth.

The Chinese were quite open about the fact that theirs is a poor country – but they are also convinced that it has far to go, and the signs of work are everywhere. Several participants remarked that they had never seen so much building going on in their lives as they saw in Beijing.

Besides sightseeing and exploring, the camp activities provided plenty of time and opportunity to get together with newly-made friends. One major effort involved putting on performances for each other. The camp included seven members and two directors from the First All Children's Theatre (First ACT), a children's performing company in New York City. Together, they helped about 30 American and Chinese students present an American-style musical play. "It was important for us to show them what our American culture is really like," said one of the First Actors. "But the best part was learning their type of music and dance and then being able to teach them ours."



It was this chance to share, to do things together that was the highlight of the experience for most of the campers. Fung Dung Wen, the littlest of the Chinese boys from Beidaihe, wants to be a sportsman when he is grown, but his favourite part of the camp was not the basketball or ping pong. It was working on Chinese and English language with the Americans. "It was when we really got to know each other," he said.

Big Andy, as the Chinese called the tallest American camper, recalls being a coach as the Chinese were swinging a softball bat for the first time in their lives. "Just run to Big Andy," they would say. "He'll tell you where to go next." The following day, coming off the field dirty, sweaty, tired and soundly beaten by the Chinese in a game of soccer, he could only smile and say, "It was great."

The trip left many different impressions on everyone, but most agreed that is was the people-to-people contact that was the most lasting and valuable. "You don't remember the fancy things," said Rachel Simon, "it's the little things...the people." The Chinese students also talked mostly about friendship—between the two countries and with the Americans they met. And if anyone had any doubts about the depth of their personal feelings, the good-bye hugs and tears at the airport put them to rest. □

*(For more information, contact camp organizer Richard Herman, Director, Interlocken International Camp, Hillsboro Upper Village, New Hampshire 03244.)*

## New development education materials

*Development Education Paper No. 24: Act locally, think globally* by Nico van Oudenhoven: a discussion about the underlying psychological and education processes that may bring about so-called pro-social behaviour in children. The stimulation of pro-social behaviour is seen as an important aspect of development education efforts. English and French from UNICEF Information Division, New York or Geneva.

*Choices, for you and your world,* an interactive wallchart that invites the users to make their own choices and face up to the consequences of their decisions. English, French and Spanish from UNICEF Information Division, New York or Geneva. □

HERE'S A GAME TO KEEP US JOINED TOGETHER

## The game exchange

More than anything else, the Sino-American Summer Camp was about friendship. And both Chinese and Americans were prepared with special ways to help children who lived 11,000 miles apart make friends. The Chinese relied on their heritage of craftsmanship, and helped the youngsters get to know each other by learning and working together. The Americans were experts at games. Here are two of the most successful friendship activities of the summer.

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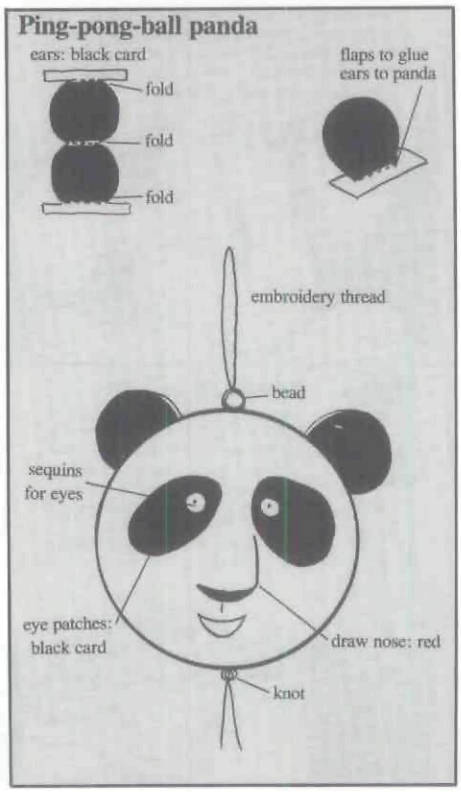
### Chinese ping pong ball pandas

To make a ping pong ball panda, you need construction paper, white glue or paste, needle, sewing thread, embroidery thread, 2 sequins, a bead and, of course, a ping pong ball.




The shapes for the panda's eyes, nose and ears were marked out for us to cut. The rest was easy. We just followed the example that was hung in the middle of the room (see picture). The cut-outs diagrammed on this page are actual size. Make sure you put your thread and bead in the right order!


Photo: Stein

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### An American game called "Knots"

To play Knots, you start with about a dozen people standing in a tight circle. Each person reaches in and takes someone's right hand. Then everyone reaches in and takes someone else's left hand. The object of the game is to untie the human Knot *without letting go of anyone's hand.* If you do it right, you will end up with everyone holding hands in a large circle. And you'll share a lot of laughs while you try.

"Knots" is one of many easy-to-learn group games described in the book *New Games,* published by Dolphin Books, Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York. For more information about *New Games*, you can write to New Games Foundation, P.O. Box 7901, San Francisco, California 94120.

# UNICEF launches 1982 State of the World's Children Report

UNICEF on 17 December 1982 released the third and most important of its annual series on the *State of the World's Children*, providing the basis, at the start of the bleakest holiday season in a generation, for one of the most powerfully hopeful news stories of the decade.

The story it tells, in brief, is that the world community, building in large part on earlier work supported by UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, UNDP and other multilateral and bilateral assistance agencies, now has the potential for a health "revolution" in many countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that is as momentous for children in the decade ahead as was the Green Revolution for increasing grain production in many countries in Asia in the decade from the late 1960's.

The report reflects the recognition that recent developments in social and biological sciences present a new opportunity for bringing about a child health revolution which is low in cost and can be achieved in a relatively short span of years. A serious commitment to it by governments and people could reduce disabilities and deaths among children in most developing countries by at least half before the end of this century—and in many countries, within a decade—as well as slowing population growth. It details four techniques which are low in cost in both financial and political terms, and, unlike the early high-yielding grain varieties, are particularly beneficial for low income families and could soon be saving the lives of 20,000 children every day if the world wanted it.

The report stresses that it is the combination of new technologies with the tremendous increase in recent years in social organization and capacity to reach the majority of people—as exemplified by the expansion of primary health care, health auxiliaries, women's groups, literacy among the poor, transistor radios and other communications mechanisms—which provides countries with dramatic new opportunities to act even in these darkening times.

**The four key elements**
(graphics from the SOWC press kit)

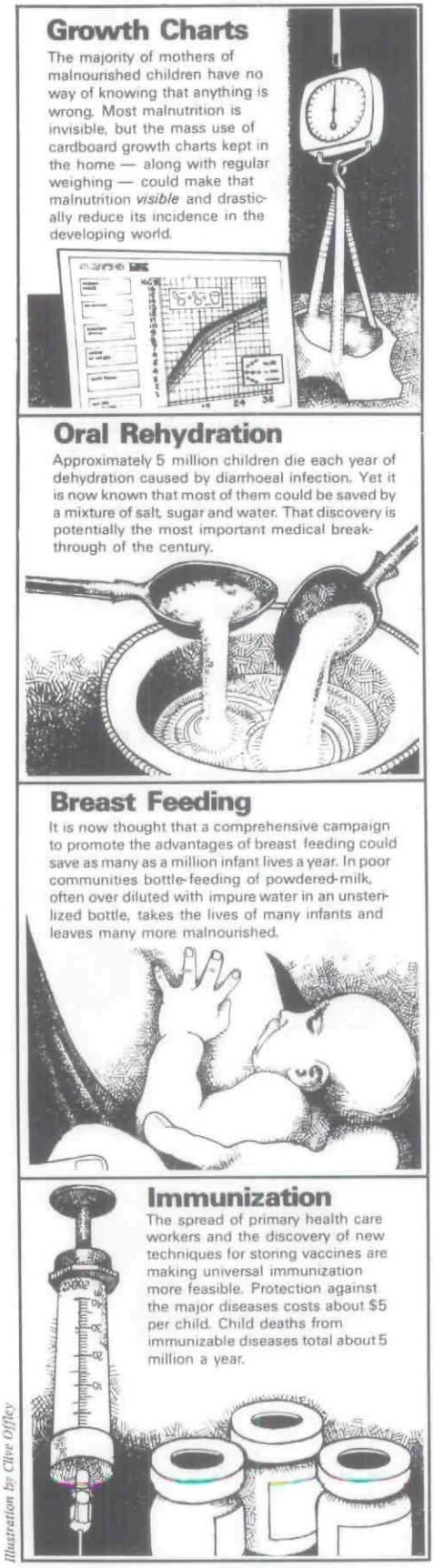


*Illustration by Clive Offley*

The most important and dramatic of the low-cost techniques is the development of a simple oral rehydration home treatment for the world's largest killer of children—diarrhoea—which takes a toll of five million children annually from largely poor families. Described as "potentially the most important medical advance of this century" by Britain's *Lancet* (one of the world's leading medical journals), this remedy—costing less than ten cents to make—remains virtually unknown in hundreds of millions of households which need it most. It is not yet used or promoted in the majority of the world's hospitals and clinics which still rely on relatively expensive intravenous treatment requiring the use of health facilities not readily accessible to the majority of families in need of treatment. The lives of millions of children could be saved each year, and the health of many millions more improved significantly, if nations were to effectively promote its use and availability through health systems, mass media, educational channels, industry, labour and religious groups, and with active support by national leaders.

The other techniques singled out from among many for special discussion because of their common attributes of being relatively low-cost in both financial and political terms are: universal child immunization; promotion of breastfeeding; and the use of child growth charts kept by mothers in their own homes as a stimulus and guide to the proper feeding of the pre-school child. Special mention is also made of family spacing of births and food supplements which would also contribute significantly to improving the health of the children and further reduce deaths, but these measures are either more difficult (birth spacing) or more financially expensive (food supplements).

The 1982 State of the World's Children report has been widely commended by world leaders, including the United Nations Secretary-General and Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher (see comments on facing page). The report and its ideas generated media interest and widescale popular response throughout the world during the Christmas season. □

# From world leaders:

### *UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar:

"The central concern of this year's State of the World's Children report is the possibility of achieving a dramatic reduction, at a very low cost, of the number of children dying each year from malnutrition and disease on our planet. It proposes an urgent and sustained attack, uniting governments, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the people and communities concerned, on the main killers of the developing world's infants and young children: six major diseases, and diarrhoea....

I commend the *State of the World's Children Report 1982-83* to all men and women of goodwill."

### *H.E. Cesar E.A. Virata Prime Minister of the Philippines

"The Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in his *State of the World's Children Report 1982-83*, highlights four important breakthroughs in the health field that would revolutionize the delivery of child health programmes. If these low-cost and proven approaches can be implemented throughout the world, the survival and development of millions of children will be assured.

The Philippines, for its part, recognizes the need to institute effectively primary health programmes as a means towards our national objective of achieving human development. The strategies embodied in the UNICEF's proposal for a child health revolution are presently being pursued and are salient features of our Philippine development plan aimed at providing health for all Filipinos by the Year 2000."

### *Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

"The concepts contained in this Report are very exciting and the thought and care which have gone into their articulation is impressive indeed. UNICEF has demonstrated an ability to tackle complex problems and outline straightforward remedies which could be readily applied by people and families in every part of the world. I am glad the United Kingdom is supporting such an effective organization, now entering its 37th year of wonderful work, and to say that support will continue, particularly at the start of the holiday season. The *State of the World's Children Report 1982-83* comes as welcome news."

### *Hon. Mr. R. Premadasa, M.P. Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

"I have no doubt that the Executive Director's *State of the World's Children Report* will take its place as one of the most important documents of our time, setting guidelines for future action for the welfare of children. Sri Lanka, whose own policies correspond so closely with the objectives of UNICEF, expresses its gratitude for the support which UNICEF has always extended towards its programme on behalf of children."

*The 1982* ***State of the World's Children Report*** *is available from* UNICEF, *Information Division, New York or Geneva; or through your local* UNICEF *National Committee or Field Office (address overleaf). The report is also published in book form by Oxford University Press for* UNICEF *together with a section "Ideas in Action" entitled* ***The Rains:*** *a report from a village in Upper Volta by Peter Adamson.*

**FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT UNICEF AND ITS WORK MAY BE OBTAINED FROM:**

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United Nations, New York 10017

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UNICEF Office for North Africa
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UNICEF Regional Office for East Africa
P.O. Box 44145, Nairobi, Kenya

UNICEF Regional Office for West Africa
04—P.O. Box 443, Abidjan 04
Ivory Coast

UNICEF Regional Office for the Americas
Calle 78 No. 11-43
Bogotá, Colombia

UNICEF Regional Office for East Asia and Pakistan
P.O. Box 2-154, Bangkok, Thailand

UNICEF Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
P.O. Box 5902, Beirut, Lebanon

UNICEF Regional Office for South Central Asia
73 Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003, India

UNICEF Office for Australia and New Zealand
P.O. Box 4045, G.P.O., Sydney, Australia

UNICEF Office for Tokyo
c/o United Nations
Information Centre, 22nd floor
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1-1, Minami—Aoyama 1-chome
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AUS-Sydney N.S.W. 2000

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(UNO-City)
22 Wagramer Strasse 9
A-1400 Vienna

**Belgium:** Belgian Committee for UNICEF
1, rue Joseph II-Boîte 9
B—1040 Brussels

**Bulgaria:** Bulgarian National Committee for UNICEF
c/o Ministry of Public Health
5, Lenin Place
BG—Sofia

**Canada:** Canadian UNICEF Committee
443, Mount Pleasant Road
CDN—Toronto, Ontario M4S 2L8

**Czechoslovakia:** Czechoslovak Committee for Cooperation with UNICEF
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U nemocnice 2
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Billedvej, 8
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DK—2100 Copenhagen

**Federal Republic of Germany:** German Committee for UNICEF
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**Finland:** Finnish Committee for UNICEF
Pieni Roobertinkatu 11
SF—00130 Helsinki 13

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DDR—1034 Berlin

**Greece:** Hellenic National Committee for UNICEF
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GR—Athens 611

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Belgrád Rakpart, 24
H—1056 Budapest

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IRL-Dublin 2

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IL—Jerusalem

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J—Tokyo

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L-Luxembourg

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NL—2508 CN's-Gravenhage

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NZ—Wellington 1

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PL—00551 Warsaw

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Colegio dos Inglesinhos
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6-8, Strada Onesti
R—7000 Bucharest 1

**San Marino:** National Commission for UNICEF of San Marino
c/o Segretaria di Stato per gli Affari Esteri
SM—47031 San Marino

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S—104 65 Stockholm

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Werdstrasse 36
CH—8021 Zürich 1

**Tunisia:** Tunisian Committee for UNICEF
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Escalier B—Bureau 158
TN—Tunis

**Turkey:** Turkish National Committee for UNICEF
Atatürk Bul. No 223/5
TR—Kavaklidere-Ankara

**United Kingdom:** United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF
46-48 Osnaburgh Street
GB—London NW1 3PU

**United States of America:** United States Committee for UNICEF
331 East 38th Street
USA—New York, N.Y. 10016

**Yugoslavia:** Yugoslav National Committee for UNICEF
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