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May 17, 1983

Draft Outline, Paper on PSC for UNOHS Expert Group  
Meeting on Information

- I. What PSC is. Theoretically, it embraces any and all communications activities designed to make development projects succeed. Mass media have their place in PSC. But increasingly, in practice, its prime locus is seen to be interpersonal and group communication. In broad terms, the aim is to enhance the process by which people share information, knowledge, ideas and motivation to improve the quality of their life in various ways.
- II. Growing awareness of the importance of PSC in the above sense. I can give some of the historical background related to my own experiences in UNICEF. Why it is needed. Relation to self-help approaches to urban problems in Third World.
- III. The concept of participatory communication. Limitations of the old top-down approach, based partly on Western advertising models. Desirability of two-way communication-- even three-way: top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal. Examples.
- IV. PSC planning-- starts at the stage of project formulation. If project includes popular participation, all to the good. Otherwise communication people may have to lobby for it. Go through project plans carefully; note every place where communication is essential and where its breakdown could lead to disaster. Provide for it and see it's included in funding.

- V. Research: Cultural and social factors. Present communication status: how do people find out about things; influence and motivate each other? What is community structure? Who are the natural communicators? Are there any popular media? What are people's own priorities? What local organizations are there?
- VI. Before implementation begins -- well before -- look at training needs in communication. Generally extension staff are poorly trained in interpersonal communication, especially technical staff. There are a number of good adult education institutes in the Developing Countries. All project staff should be exposed to some training in adult education; community development staff should specialize in it.
- VII. Discussion at this point of Lusaka and Hyderabad urban projects, in regard to what's been said.
- VIII. Media and other aids. (I'm deliberately postponing my discussion of these glamorous things to this spot.)
- Role of mass media. Press and TV reach the elites: they can be used to influence policy. Radio reaches everybody; can be widely used for PSC proper provided there is on-the-ground interpersonal communication support.
  - Group media (slide sets, 16 mm films etc.) These are communication aids-- do not really stand on their own without a good presenter.
- I'll stress the importance of making all these media products relevant and I'll stress the absolute necessity of sound pre-testing.

- IX. Feedback, monitoring and adjustment. (A more active slant than "evaluation", I think.) Communications strategies and tactics at project level have got to be flexible. No plan is perfect. Get feedback from the people concerned; monitor in carefully; and if a change of course is indicated, make it.
- X. Special PSC considerations in relation to urban projects. A big plus: limited geographic areas with easy access makes an urban project a good testing ground. Political difficulties must be faced: e.g. antagonism toward urban poor, misappropriation of plots. Intersectoral involvements-- housing, water supply, sanitation, health and health education, day-care, income generating activities. Intersectoral communications teamwork important.
- XI. Some ethical questions. A good grass-roots communicator often gets radicalized to a certain extent. What if he finds the government authorities are trying to manipulate people in the interests of someone else? Should he use his talents and skills to further this manipulation? Solicit suggestions for a PSC "code of ethics".



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Notes

**Definition of PSC. Discussion of its role and impact. Ethical questions related to PSC.**

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