

ORIENTATION TO UNICEF, NEW YORK PROGRAMME

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PSC in Basic Services for Children

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1. Communication, broadly speaking, is the process through which human beings share social and cultural interactions, information, knowledge, experience, ideas, skills, motivations and aspirations. One of the end results is or may be attitudinal or behavioural change. It is necessary to state this obvious fact because too many people concerned with development work still tend to think that they are talking about communication when, in fact, they are restricting themselves to communication aids, such as posters, billboards, one-way T.V. or radio programmes, etc. Dr. K.E. Eapen (formerly at Bangalore University, India), sums up this dilemma nicely by saying, "A basic misconception of communication and change...is lack of understanding of communication as a social process and...mistaking it for transmission towers, documentary films, one-way lectures, etc." The message and people's participation in its development are the mainstay of communication.
2. Communication: A Comprehensive Strategy. In social communication, the focus is on behavioural or attitudinal change and not merely the diffusion of innovations. For instance, it is the change of attitude towards excreta disposal that may "force" a person or family to construct, use and maintain a pit latrine and not the provision of the famous cement slab. To achieve a change in knowledge, attitude and practice in health matters, there must be a comprehensive communication strategy and plan in all health related programmes. Ideally, this strategy should form an integral part of any development programme which includes a health sector.
3. Communication in UNICEF-Assisted Programmes. What UNICEF calls PSC can be described as programme or project-oriented communications. This is a strategy and process within the planning, programming, implementation and evaluation cycles and aims at facilitating "community education, motivation, behavioural change, new skills acquisition and will lead to economic, political, social and technological changes. The scope of PSC can be described as follows:

"The effective implementation of programmes with which UNICEF co-operates calls for communication inputs (PSC) designed to educate and motivate communities to participate in the implementation of the assisted programmes....UNICEF can make an input to PSC designed to

help provide the information and encourage the motivation necessary for people to participate in the provision and sustenance of services of benefit to children. It has a key role in the encouragement of popular involvement, and UNICEF is therefore increasing its support to PSC. UNICEF PSC personnel, stationed in a number of regional and representative offices, provide professional advice and technical services benefitting children. Support may be given to the training of front-line workers and of their trainers; and for communication equipment and supplies to develop, pre-test and to produce PSC educational materials."*

Thus in UNICEF the concept of PSC combines processes and techniques whose goal is to enable planners, technicians, implementers and communities to:

- a) Incorporate educational, social and psychological aspects/components into programmes benefitting children, so that behavioural change and some sort of self-reliance are facilitated by utilizing interpersonal approaches, modern and popular traditional media, management communication and information linkages.
- b) Sensitize governments in developing countries to the problems of children and opportunities for action.
- c) Assist project staff and members of the communities to "communicate" in the same language so that both participate fully in the services and development programmes.
- d) Develop, produce, utilize and evaluate integrated programme support communications.

4. PSC Planning and Programming Stages. Within the overall UNICEF/government programme development process, the following steps can be identified:

- a) Analysis of problem(s) for communication components
- b) Specification of societal values, goals, objectives, etc. (data base)
- c) Specification of communication technology, resources and services
- d) Identifying all target groups
- e) Setting behavioural objectives for each target group
- f) Designing activities (including staff training and advocacy) to achieve these behavioural objectives

*From UNICEF Board Document E/ICEF.670/Rev.1 dated April 1981

- g) Designing activities to achieve the behavioural objectives
- h) Designing and producing messages, aids and media to support the activities (media and selection and mix)
- i) Development of an implementation workplan and schedule
- j) Designing of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms including the specifications of quantifiable indicators
- k) Indications for sectoral co-ordination or integration
- l) Evaluation of inputs and outputs. Are the objectives met and what is the impact of the programme on the lives of the people?

5. Organisation

a) Field Offices. There are about 25 PSC Officers located in the field offices and their duties and responsibilities include:

- Working with Programme Officers, Project Personnel, Advisers and their government counterparts to identify communications dimensions in existing and planned UNICEF-assisted programmes and projects.
- Advising and guiding the assisted government ministries, the Rep- and Programme Officers in pre-operational appraisal, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the communication dimensions of the assisted programmes. Participating in programme formulation, previews and review is essential.
- Advising the Ministries and regional or provincial administration on appropriate communication instruments and technology development, including their utilisation for social development.
- Guiding relevant ministries in the orientation and training of all levels of staff in the theory and practice of PSC in social development programmes, and strengthening of national PSC and training capacities.
- Developing PSC training curricula for trainers of extension workers.
- Advising Representatives and Programme staff on advocacy and public information strategies and plans to explain new trends in UNICEF policy, problems and needs of children to senior government officials and planners.
- Organising communication research, evaluation and training activities and exploring opportunities, e.g. use of group/village networks, appropriate communication technology, etc. and the experimentation of communication concepts and methods within the context and needs

of programmes for children.

- In collaboration with Programme staff and in concert with the Supply staff and procurement staff, supervising the administrative details of PSC programmes, e.g. training grants disbursement, issuance of SSA contracts, equipment and supplies specifications, field testing and monitoring, etc.
- Designing programmes for the development and testing of field level communication equipment, e.g. battery or solar powered radio receivers or tape recorders, film and slide projectors, cameras, etc.
- Organizing the pretesting of communication materials, posters, flipcharts and other visual aids.
- Disseminating communication research findings, experiences and other new trends in PSC to government officials, Programme and other PSC staff.

PSC methods employed vary according to the special needs and requirements of individual programmes and projects. It utilizes the most appropriate media to reach the target audience. These may be through audio and visual means such as posters, films, pamphlets, radio and television programmes, bearing in mind the need for communicating with the layman in a clear language.

During the last few years PSC has become a clear reality within UNICEF. There have been an increasing number of requests from governments to UNICEF field offices to initiate innovative activities and approaches in community education and to offer special assistance in the formulation of communication plans aimed at the community.

For instance, in 1980, field PSC Officers numbering approximately 25, were indeed instrumental in organizing a health communication advisory services, in designing a manual on communication strategies for water supplies, in training radio producers to support basic services activities through the mass media in establishing an interministerial committee to facilitate better communication at the community level orientation of Programme Officers in PSC planning and programming processes. These are some of the examples of the many varied tasks which have been undertaken by PSC field officers. At present, there is still a great need for improvement and for expansion in PSC related programmes.

b) New York. Functions of the PSC Section in New York are:

- Strengthening of awareness amongst UNICEF staff of the role of PSC in popular participation for community-based or basic services, including primary health care.
- Acting as a focal point for exchange of experiences and skills,

and co-ordinating communications planning, implementation and evaluation.

- Providing guidance to Programme group and field offices in the assessment and evaluation of PSC components of UNICEF-assisted programmes and projects.
- Identifying PSC resources and keeping track of the latest communication research relevant to UNICEF field programme work.
- Disseminating communications research findings to PSC and Programme Officers in the field through the periodic PSC newsletter, regular consultations, and staff development and training programmes.
- In collaboration with the Supply Division, providing technical backstopping to field offices in production and purchase of educational and communication supplies/equipment.

6. Future Trends. Future assistance will focus on strengthening the government capacity for training field workers in community education methods, development of low-cost community-based media systems and technologies. More attention will be given to specific educational and promotional campaigns in the field of nutrition, especially breast-feeding and in water and sanitation, in the area of personal and environmental hygiene. Development of indigenous PSC manuals for extension workers and their trainers need to be developed for more countries. Lastly, a PSC planning and programming manual will be prepared for use by all PSC and Programme Officers in the field. There is a need to assist developing countries in undertaking applied/field communication research programmes which will enable them to identify and develop relevant communication systems suitable for the needs of their development programmes and citizens. This research will enable such countries to establish criteria and effectiveness of the various media.

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Notes

The paper discusses: communication ("broadly speaking is the process through which human beings share social and cultural interactions, information, knowledge, experience, ideas, skills, motivations and aspirations. ..."); Communication: A comprehensive strategy; communication in UNICEF-assisted programmes; PSC planning and programming stages; organisation; PSC functions at UNICEF Hq in New York; future trends

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