

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

Planning PSC Campaigns

No paper was presented to begin this discussion. Instead, we began the discussion by presenting several examples of PSC campaigns and then drew on the experiences of the participants in communication or motivational campaigns.

Mrs. Annette Jere, Director of the Public Relations Unit of the National Nutrition Commission in Zambia, described two campaigns the Unit had been involved in. It came into being to service a national nutrition campaign in Zambia. The Unit considered that its audience fell into several identifiable groups each with different needs. It had to create awareness of the nutrition campaign and its nutritional messages among senior government officials; professional groups involved; extension workers; mothers in rural areas; and finally, the international agencies who were providing much of the money for the whole campaign. For each group special materials were prepared (although, of course, there was some overlap — materials could sometimes be used by several groups). Since Mrs. Jere had shown participants around the Public Relations Unit's offices and workshops earlier in the workshop, and explained their use on that occasion, there was no need to go through the materials in detail. In response to a question, Mrs. Jere did discuss the use of films and slides. She said that it had been the Unit's experience that films are better used in the urban or semi-urban areas since people are more accustomed to the medium of film. In the rural areas there is a tendency for the medium itself to be distracting. Consequently, the Unit has found slide sets a more suitable visual aid especially because the slower speed is more suitable for rural audiences.

Then Mrs. Jere described a very different type of campaign. The Commission, along with UNICEF, wanted to test market a soy-enriched maize meal mixture. The aim was to find out if Zambians would eat soy-flour, if so in what proportion when mixed with maize meal, and finally, could it be served and sold in the same way as breakfast meal. To cut the story short, the product was a 'good' product but the problem was how to sell it. The first problem was to pick a name, in English to avoid tribal language barriers and for prestige reasons. The name chosen was "Top Score". Then an attractive bag had to be designed and careful thought given to the size of bag. Two sales outlets were selected in different areas of Lusaka (the object, remember, was a controlled marketing test). Promotion of "Top Score" was by articles in the press, posters at point of sale, handouts at the point of sale and elsewhere, and mentions on the radio.

Litsebe Mokhachane introduced and described the Lesotho Applied Nutrition campaign emphasising that the way round communication barriers is by systematic planning and the phased use of available resources. This, he stressed, is what distinguishes a PSC campaign from the mere production of visual aids. He emphasised that everyone involved in the applied nutrition campaign has their role to play in overcoming communication blockages, but their role depends on their abilities and the facilities at their disposal. The extension worker is very important, but it is not necessarily his job to design and make the posters for use in the campaign. That can be done centrally. (For more details see PSC Paper No. 11).

Dr. Shawki Barghouti argued that the reason many PSC campaigns failed was because they were conceived as top-down operations. The authority or agency at the capital has an idea or message that it feels the rural community should be made aware of. Around the idea several visual aids are prepared such as films, posters, slides, leaflets, etc. These are then aimed and fired at the rural audience rather like an army commander trying to enforce his will: first he tries the pistol, if that is no good he reaches for his gun, failing that he calls for his rifle, then the cannon, and finally in desperation he orders in the heat-guided missiles. Despite the battery of visual aid armoury, the central authorities still complain that no one is watching the films, or reading the leaflets. Shawki argued that the only way to overcome this problem was to take the idea to the district level extension agents and government officials, let them assimilate the ideas and then let them consider how best to reach the rural audience with whom they are in constant daily touch. As they consider the ideas and the problem of communicating them, the district level officials and extension agents will turn again to the centre for support in designing and producing supporting communication materials. This was the approach used in the Machakos experiment (PSC Paper No. 23) and it was proving very successful.

John Balcomb argued that this was a good approach but not universally applicable and extremely difficult to budget a year in advance. Government departments and international agencies alike had to prepare budgets well in advance and justify them to their financial controllers. He then drew a matrix on the board which he found helpful in estimating PSC campaign costs. He took as his example a campaign to increase use of ante-natal facilities. John then identified the various groups and the messages that were to be communicated, by which medium and at what cost.

A MATRIX FOR PLANNING PSC CAMPAIGNS

Project: Increasing use of Ante-natal facilities in country 'X'

<u>Groups</u>	<u>Messages</u>	<u>Media</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1. Ministries				
2. Voluntary Agencies				
3. Community Development Officers				
4. Medical Staff				
5. Fathers				
6. Mothers				
7. General Public				
8. Local Leaders				

Shawki replied that the matrix was too diagramatic and led to serious over-simplification. No matter how sensitively used, such a matrix only reinforced top-down planning. For a PSC campaign to be successful, the objective must be discussed with the district level officials and the campaign planned in consultation with the beneficiaries. As for budgeting, he argued that it was perfectly possible to estimate in advance the approximate expenditure for a given campaign; the important thing was not to determine the allocation of expenditure without reference to the priorities as defined and experienced at the district level, otherwise the communication materials, however well produced, would lie around unused.

Justus Siboe was concerned with the problem of scarce financial resources and the shortage of time available. It was not often possible to prepare materials for each group on John's matrix. One had to decide which was the most important group to be persuaded of the campaign messages, and then concentrate on that group and those who had most influence over those people. If a campaign was targeted on mothers in the rural areas, then resources should be concentrated on the mothers and the opinion leaders in the local community. He felt that if it was Ministry policy, then the officials and extension workers would understand and approve the campaign. This assertion was challenged sharply by several participants, but on the whole the group felt that while the Permanent Secretary had to be kept informed, he did not want to be continually bothered by extension agents explaining a policy to him which he had already approved.

Greg Lanning argued that we had to recognise that different strategies were required for different situations. There was no magic campaign strategy which could be applied to every situation. Some campaigns, such as the movement of people to make way for a dam, required no motivation, merely explanation. A test marketing campaign was different in turn from a mass nutritional campaign.

Finally, while the district level approach of Dr. Barghouti seemed to coincide with the workshop aim of promoting two-way communication, there were clearly countries where the political structure was so structured that it did not allow for district level initiative.

Joseph Mahiga (Tanzania) explained how the Tanzanians had evolved a system whereby planning for development began at the district level. The national planning authorities indicated what funds were available. District Development Committees made requests for development capital and proposed specific projects. These were discussed at district and regional level and adjustments made before being passed up to the national authorities for final decisions. In this process, request and arguments might pass up and down several times before an agreed consensus was reached.



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**Part II. General considerations in project support communications.
The paper was discussed during Part II of the workshop, "General considerations in project support communications."**

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6