TARO Workshop on Communications
for Social Development

Jamaica, 22-29 April 1981

Assessment of Social Communication
in Latin America
and of Some Constraints

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ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND OF SOME CONSTRAINTS

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When I was asked to present a paper at this seminar on the topic of Social Communication in Latin America, taking as my point of departure a general review of the subject and a critique, I was at first overcome by a certain anxiety. After having thought the matter out more coolly I realized that my reaction was due both to a practical consideration and to a personal inclination.

The former is that the subject appears manageable but is in reality complex, very far-reaching, and even controversial. The latter, --let me be honest both with my audience and with myself-- consists in the fact that over the years I have developed a certain tendency toward skepticism when I address this topic.

In order to talk about communication for development in a meaningful way, one must explore some very troubled ground, one must tread paths as winding an unpredictable as human behavior itself. It is never an easy task, and is even less so when one endeavors to encompass the most significant variables of the problem, even in a very simplified manner. Moreover, I am skeptican first and foremost because of the difficulty of confronting the powerful political and economic machinery that controls communication and channels it, visibly and invisibly, nationally and internationally.

Secondly, my skepticism is heightened when I cast a glance over the motley array of theories which are current —often unrealistic, divergent, and , couched in esoteric terms as if to bar access even to the initiated, and to those who, although they may be laymen, are willing and able to do something to foster change.

What I mean to say is that, even if we acknowledge that much research remains to be done in the field of communication, theoreticians and their theories are legion but very little of this yields any benefit at decision-making levels, and even less at the grass-roots level.

The problem, then, is one of exchanging, analyzing and re-casting practices, concepts, and attitudes, and it is in that spirit that I should like to share some ideas with you. Any disagreements or differences of view which may arise I hope will be accepted as part of the give-and-take inherent in dialogue which enables us to learn from each other.

Toward a Frame of Reference

Let us begin by agreeing that we are discussing communication as a development support measure. I would propose that we begin from the assumption that support communication for development is directly related to a number of factors which I shall list, not exhaustively or by order of importance: the size, professionalism, and caliber of communication staff and related personnel involved in a given project from conception to completion; degree of commitment; participation by the public from the summit to the base; available resources; technical and administrative organization; size of the project; technical and human reliability; the setting and meeting of goals; availability of applicable research results; degree of experience acquired in the design, production, distribution, and utilization of various materials; prevalent attitudes in social, political, and economic quarters; quality and timeliness of messages; support; status of the project; etc.

The Latin American continent is not only vast but ethnically, culturally, geographically, and politically complex. Most of the twenty-odd countries of the continent and the Caribbean are enduring not only poverty but also different kinds and degrees of domination, internal and external, which is easily perceptible in the striking underdevelopment to be seen in rural areas and on the outskirts of major cities.

One of a number of major obstacles in overcoming this situation is, in the view of many social scientists, the lack of a national communication policy and the misuse or complete neglect of communications resources --a situation which leads inevitably to a state of non-communication, with everything this implies. It is surprising to note that at the present stage of institutional and technological thinking, Mexico alone has a National Law on Communication. UNESCO, it is true, has taken the over-simplified view --as expressed by one of its senior officials-- that there exist de-facto communications policies because of the fortuitous fact that some countries have State resources in the field, such as communications schools (these being generally no more than journalism schools) or telecommunications services (which tend to be highly deficient from a development perspective), and certain laws which in fact pertain more to information than to communication proper.[1]

Many programs of assistance aimed at improving the people's standards of living are under way in Latin America. Some, very few, have achieved their goals. Others --unfortunately, the majority-- are only on the way, bogged down in a tangle of ineptitudes and vested interests, and diminished by short-sighted national governments. Others, finally, continue to fight on against apathy, political incompetence, and even opposition arising out of structural disparities or from the mental laxness of decision-"makers".

1 Sommerland, E. Lloyd. "National Communication Systems: Policies and Options", in Social Communication Studies and Documents, No. 74, UNESCO, Paris, 1975.

The direct relationship that exists between development and available communication systems is therefore evident. It is not by accident that the least developed countries have the least efficient means of communication. Inversely, the best communication systems are in the hands of the most highly developed countries. Do our countries perhaps have a mistaken conception of what development is? Have they failed to set specific, realistic, and viable development goals? Or are they not concerned about development?

Everything seems to suggest that it is all of these things and more.

Reality has its laws, its structures, its dynamic, and gives rise to situations whose origin is hard to trade. To find the causes of such situations and form reasonable judgements, it is necessary to engage in critical thinking, to distinguish the fortuitous from the essential, the effect from the cause. Only in this way can we arrive at a frame of reference within which we can form a theory that will enable us to interpret what is happening on the national   and even the international scene.

Very few countries if any have a definite communication policy, not to speak of a communication philosophy. The politicians in charge --with the usual exceptions-- do not believe that communication is "image-building" or prestigious. Obviously they do not know what is involved, nor are they concerned about it. They have a preference for propaganda, perhaps because they themselves have been exposed to commercial persuasion and share in or benefit from its results.

There is, of course, not a single government capable of addressing communication within a definite political context conducive to development. With the exception of communication specialists in executive positions, it is rare to find public officials capable of appreciating the negative impact of social non-communication.

In the private sector, on the other hand, the owners of the mass media --sometimes instintctively and sometimes through direct knowledge gleaned from their connections with major international interests-- do have an understanding of the power of the media and have very successfully used them to maintain situations of dominance and privilege.

The point that I seek to make is that social communication, as a concomitant factor in development --i.e. constituting a comprehensively improved way of life for Latin-American peoples-- has, with some exceptions, been a failure. And let me add --although it be to our chagrin-- that much of the blame for this falls to us, although we readily concede to the dominant classes the lion's share of responsibility.

I do not know whether I have succeeded in sketching at least the outlines of a minimum frame of reference for the purposes of this paper. I believe I have not. Indeed, I think I have only scratched the surface of the problem. But I will content myself with this, in the hope that I may be able to gather along the way some of the basic elements necessary to bear out the hypotheses I wish to advance and to share with you.

The Problem

I have the impression that many of us lack a proper focus. We have ended by believing that the main problem is communication, and this is not so. I am probably not telling you anything new, but the main problem we are facing as communication workers is underdevelopment. Communication is a derivative problem, nothing more. Communication is neither the cause nor the effect in this situation.

If we look at things in this perspective, communications does become "our problem", the problem we must tackle as professionals in communications, as informal communicators, and as professional researchers in the field.

I have just said that social communication as a contributing factor in development has had many failures and few successes. You will agree that this is strong language, and it certainly is. But the fact is that I cannot take credit for it. It is a conclusion reached by research, which I share.

With a very few exception, the media in Latin America do not take part in the drive for development. This non-participation takes various forms, from omission to distortion, ultimately leading to opposition to change. This should come as no surprise if we only remember that the media (press, radio, television) are business concerns —concerns which are, moreover, deeply and directly involved with the economic and political powers-that-be in each country and even internationally.

"A continuous stream of indoctrination, taking the form of commercial propaganda, distractions, TV serials, comic strips, and even purportedly objective news, contributes to maintaining a population subdued by the dominant elites and by the upper classes of society. This tendency is exacerbated by the prevalence of private property in the communication media."[1]

The same authors round out this somber picture by adding that there is "powerful structural resistance" that prevent communication from instilling heightened awareness and a dynamic spirit in society.

[1] Díaz Bordenave, Juan and Martins de Carvalho, Horacio: Planificacion y Comunicacion, Ediciones CIESPAL, Quito, Ecuador, 1978.

Beltran confirms this assertion: "...Not even specialized publications in

agriculture are written with a view to the majority of farmers. They are addressed,

rather, to a minority with a high level of education, social prestige, political

power and, above all, the wherewithal to buy what the newspapers are selling."[1]

Cordero[2] supports the view taken by Beltran, with reference to a specific country.

He finds that 63% of the printed text in the agricultural supplements of Costa Rica's

morning newspapers (Costa Rica being a predominantly agricultural country) was

devoted to advertising; 7.7% was devoted to information about fairs and exhibitions,

which in practice amount to centers for business transactions between wealthy cattlemen;

the remaining 29% of the printed matter fell into 8 other categories.

An example of the failure of social communication in Latin America can be found

in the fact that, as early as 1966, Barbosa Lima[3] found that the content of the most

widely viewed television station in Buenos Aires was dominated by the following

elements: 32% for movies from the U.S.A., 22% for TV serials, 20% for comedy shows,

20% for advertising, and only 8% for information.

1 Beltrán, Luis Ramiro, "Communication in Latin America: Persuasion for Status Quo
  or for National Development", Doctoral Thesis, Michigan State University, Department
  of Communication, Michigan, 1970.
2.Cordero, Mario, "Analisis de contenido de los suplementos agropecuarios de 2 medios de
  Costa Rica" ("Analysis of the content of the agricultural supplements of two Costa Rican
  publications"), Graduate Thesis, University of Costa Rica, School of Journalism,
  San José, 1973.
3.Barbosa Lima, Fernando,"La radio, la television y el pueblo brasileño" ("Radio,
  television, and the Brasilian people") in La Radio, la television frente a la necesidad
  cultural en America Latina (Radio and television facing Latin America's cultural needs)
  CIESPAL, Quito, Ecuador, 1966.

[1]
With regard to radio, Pasquali has pointed out that what is being produced

for radio is "...a vast daily transfer of tastes, ideologies, ways of life,

language, patterns of behavior, problems and hopes, addressed to people

of a different historical and cultural background, and who do not the knowledge

or the opportunity to raise effective resistance."

Disregard for information consistent with development, as a result of

"structural resistance", is apparent from the quotations from Beltran and Cordero.

Distortion is implicit in the findings of Pasquali, and opposition in Pasquali and

in the statements of Diaz Bordenave.

My personal experience is, so to speak, more direct: I did not need to engage

in research. A newspaper in my country rejected an article of mine on the use of

bamboo in irrigation works, explaining that "there is modern equipment for modern

irrigation currently on the market". The article was not published.

1.Pasquali, Antonio:"Latin America, Our Image or Theirs?" in Getting the Message Across:
an Inquiry on Successes and Failures of Cross-Cultural Communication in the Contemporary
World, UNESCO, Paris, 1975.

This experience of mine tends to bear out the view of Beltran [1] to the effect that "It is unrealistic to expect a significant contribution to Latin American development from communications media which are managed by private interests,. predisposed toward the preservation of the status quo, and designed to sell ever more things to more people."

Further studies suggest that the situation remains unchanged. Beltran and Fox de Cardona, [2] quoted by Diaz Bordenave [3], sum up the situation in revealing terms:

"In short, the main features of the system of ownership of the social communication media in Latin America are as follows:

1. generally, a high degree of concentration;

2. an oligopolistic pattern, particularly marked in the cases of radio and television;

3. for television, a trend toward international monopoly;

4. a clear-cut predominance of private over public ownership;

5. a definite link between ownership of the media (especially the main daily papers and television channels) and ownership of the most important means of production (mining, agriculture, and banking) identifying with the status quo."

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1 Beltran, Luis Ramiro: Apuntes para un diagnostico de la incomunicacion social en America Latina: la persuasion en favor del statu quo (Notes toward an assessment of social non-communication in Latin America: persuasion in the service of the status quo), CIESPAL-CEDAL, La Catalina, Costa Rica.

2 Beltran, L. R. and Fox de Cardona, Elizabeth: Communication Rights: A Latin-American Perspective (miemographed paper), Bogota, Colombia, 1976.

3 Diaz Bordenave, Juan, op. Cit. pp. 49-50.

Beltran and Fox de Cardona comment on this situation as follows:

"This indicates rather clearly that the distribution of options with regard to the dissemination of messages in Latin America is markedly skewed in favor of the small minorities which own and manage the communications media, to the detriment of the vast majority of the 300 million people inhabiting the region."

The above quotations --which could be complemented from other authors with other approaches-- should suffice to show that social communication in Latin America is neither social nor communication. Interestingly enough, those very countries which are today experiencing political strife which affects us all have never even come near to authentic development, and their media have always been dominated by quarters with "structural resistance" to change.

It cannot generally be asserted that social communication has played even the slightest role in Latin American development. One can point to very few achievements. There is not even full consensus about the success of serious programs such as the Radio Broadcasting Schools of Colombia after 25 years of continuous and incalculable efforts. The same is true of the "Movimiento de Educacao de Base", MEB, ("Grass-roots Education Movement) in Brasil, whose efforts at arousing public awareness were thwarted by elitist, conservative military men.[1]

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[1] Beltran, L. R., "Social Structure and Rural Development Communication in Latin America: the 'Radiophonic Schools' of Colombia", in Summer Conference on Communication and Group Transformation for Development, The East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1975.

Other still more unfortunate cases in this list of forgotten projects are those like the INACODE of Bolivia, which was possibly one of the best-planned communication projects in Latin America.[1] Timorous but brutal soldiers joined with an effete but moneyed elite to frustrate a program which was destined to be an example of advanced communications in the service of Latin American development. In Nicaragua a literacy program which had boundless possibilities for furthering human growth is making use of a deliberately distorted form of social communication, consciously concealing social and human elements which could endow it with enviably high standards. The final and perhaps the best example of mediocre, ineffective, and ill-conceived social communication may be found in the failure of agrarian reform in the countries of Latin America.

There are, nonetheless, exceptions. They are minor exceptions, but at least they indicate that some things --perhaps a great deal-- can still be done, depending on the decisions, strategies and activities we put into practice.

Here in Jamaica, a very important project is under way in which social communication is playing a key role. I refer to the Women's Center, the first of its kind in the world, a project being elaborated by local entities with the support of international organizations, and which is meeting with exemplary success.[2]

1 INACODE, Instituto Nacional de Comunicaciones para el Desarrollo. Office of the President of the Republic, La Paz, Bolivia, 1978.
2 The Women's Center - report by Pamela McNeil, Freya Olafson MPh, Dorian L. Powell M Sc, and Jean Jackson, in Pathpapers. Communications Programs. The Pathfinder Fund, USA 1980.

Susana Amaya reports on an inter-group experiment under way in Uruguay in which social communication has become the motive force.[1]   CIMDER, the Centro de Investigaciones Multidisciplinarias en Desarrollo Rural (Center for Multidisciplinary Research in Rural Development) in Colombia, whose central aim is research, is having evident success in making use of social communication and is also studying the effectiveness of integrated health-agriculture messages.[2] In Panama, Guatemala, Brasil, and a few other countries, there are also positive projects under way. Although none of them has the communicative depth and scope of objectives that ACPO shows in Colombia, since many of them are experimental, the observation is nonetheless pertinent, for it suggests that, despite "structural resistance" and other cultural barriers, something is being done, and it cannot be said that the future will not bring any important changes.

1 Amaya, Susana, Rueda de Productores, "Experiencias con comunicacion integral en Uruguay" (Experiments with Comprehensive Communication in Uruguay), in El CIID Informa Vol. 9, No. 1, p. 8, Bogota, Colombia, 1980.
2 De Roux, Gustavo I., Necesidades de Investigación en Comunicación sobre Salud en la Estrategia de CIMDER, Centro Interamericano de Adestramiento en Comunicación para Poblacion. (CIACOP), San José, Costa Rica, 1977.

What is Development?

We have said that our overriding concern is development, and we should define what we mean by the word.

Let us begin by recalling that abundant study and research has been devoted to the meaning and theoretical and practical contents of what continues to be an unsatisfied, utterly unsatisfied, aspiration. Some students of the field have advanced definitions which border on the metaphysical and neglect the realities of underdevelopment. However, I do share some of the views and definitions espoused by some writers, particularly since these are necessary to bring out the dimensions of a human tragedy unmatched in devastation even by the combined effects of the last two world wars.

Let me then first refer to the definition put forward by Beltrán[1], which has the advantage of expressing in few words a goal which is certainly idealistic but also inspiring and strongly motivating.

For Beltrán, development is "a rapid and far-reaching process of socio-political change which prompts basic changes in the economy, the culture, and the ecology, in order to foster the moral and material advancement of the majority of the population in conditions of dignity, justice, and freedom."

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1 Beltrán, L. R., "El papel de la comunicacion en la promoción del desarrollo y la integración" (The role of communication in promoting development and integration") in Décimo Tercera Conferencia Mundial de la Sociedad Internacional para el Desarrollo. San José, Costa Rica. 1973.

In 1974 a group of development specialists met under United Nations Auspices and produced what is known as "The Cocoyoc Declaration".[1] While remaining akin to Beltran's philosophy, this document takes a step forward in a practical sense by recognizing that man has basic needs. The Declaration says "Out primary concern is redefining the aim of development. Development refers to people, not things. Human beings have basic needs: food, housing, dress, health, education. Any growth process not designed to meet these needs —or, worse still, which might hamper their satisfaction— would be a travesty or parody of the idea of development... We therefore reject the concept of 'growth first and distributive justice later'".

So it would seem that the experts at Cocoyo grasped the popular wisdom inherent in such sayings as "first things first" and "Don't put the cart before the horse."

Nyerere adopts and expands the Cocoyoc Declaration by giving the human person pride of place and adding, in the same philosophical vein as Beltran, that "...a man develops by taking his own decisions; improving his understanding of what he is doing and his reasons for doing it; increasing his knowledge and skills; and playing a full part, on equal footing, in the life of the community to which he belongs.

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1 Symposium on "Patterns of Resource Use, Environment and Development Strategies." United Nations. Cocoyoc, Mexico, 1974.
2 Nyerere, Julius, Freedom and Development, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Nyerere agrees, practically speaking, with Tarso[1] as quoted by Beltran:
"...In a society like that of Latin America, with extensive populations deprived
of decision-making power and access to economic resources, it is impossible to
develop a high level of production and consumption and an advanced economy."
According to Beltran, this has been particularly true of the agricultural sector.
Why, he wonders, did the so-called "green revolution" become an empty slogan?
"...not by any lack of remarkably advanced seed varieties, certainly. It was
simply because the land, the know-how, the credit, and the outlets for marketing
were entirely in the hands of a minority of farmers." He adds that this fact
is recognized by one of the architects of the "green revolution", E. H. Wellhausen.

Perhaps it is Pearson who goes to the heart of the matter: "We should not
forget that developing peoples are not starting afresh in a new world, but have
to change and grow and develop within an unfavorable context because in the past
their position has been largely determined by the interests of other nations.
If we overlook that historical context we cannot understand the problems which
exist today. Nor can international co-operation be successful in resolving them."

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1 Tarso, Paulo de, "Educational Needs in Developing Society" in Shapiro, Manuel ed.,
  Cultural Factors in Inter-American Relations. Notre Dame University Press,
  Notre Dame, 1968.
2 Pearson, Lester B., The Crisis of Development, Praeger, 1970, New York.

Another author, by contrast, says that "...obviously, the difficulties lie deep in the development process, the scope and complexity of communication, in the culture and conditions in a developing country." I wonder whether this author knows what he is saying! Is he deliberately disregarding the involvement of developed countries, which Pearson cites? Why does he leave aside the relationship of dependence which, as in the case of the "green revolution", seems to serve only to make the rich richer and the poor poorer? This author, Mr. Yu,[1] is overly concerned about definitions. One could, he writes, "easily fluster some experts in communications for development by simply asking them to define what development is."

The problem, however, is not one of definitions. As I noted earlier, we have more than enough definitions. The problem is simpler: how to live? Let us not even say "how to live well", but just to live decently. The alternative is to go on with poverty, infant mortality, subjugation, and, at the end of the line, only the hope of dying as the ultimate relief from a life devoid of all expectations.

1 Yu, Frederick T. C., "Communication Policy and Planning for Development: Some Notes on Research" in Daniel Lerner and Lyle M. Nelson eds. Communication Research - A Half-Century Appraisal, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press 1977.

But enough of this doing battle with definitions and semi-esoteric theories. Those who deal in development for its own sake without taking underdevelopment as their point of departure have done a disservice to social communication and to human communication. It is a very serious matter, as I have often emphasized, that so many people, seemingly engaged in a snobbish vogue, should occupy their time spinning theories and semantic niceties which ultimately lead to placing in an ivory tower problems which exist here on earth, amid the windowless shacks of the shantytowns, in the very flesh and blood of the impoverished peasant.

Development is many things. It is almost anything you care to mention, so long as we do not confuse it with modernism. But fundamentally, in human terms, development means that people should have a reasonable minimum of food, so that children to not die of hunger and intestinal parasites. It means that sick people should be able to find doctors, medicines, and medical centers. It means that children should have a school where they can learn, that peasants should have land, credit, and technical help to produce profitably, that city dwellers should have well-paid jobs, that people should have a decent place to live and raise their families. The rest, including semantic definitions, comes later.

But let us recognize, unpleasant though it may be, that modernism does not take us very far toward development. To be convinced, we need only visit some of the capitals of Latin America, take a few days to observe some Atlantic and Pacific beach resorts, take a walk along one of the major highways, or look at the statistics for imports of automobiles and consumption of expensive perfumes and liquors; then, if we want to see the other side of the coin, we can leave the city, and we may find, in some village of the Andean foothills, that indian woman who was found nursing both her own child and a pig "because the child will die but the pig will go to market".

But this is not to suggest that Latin American cities are the acme of modernity. Romero observes that "Contemporary cities have ceased to be cities and have become a juxtaposition of two ghettoes sealed off from each other."[1]   As I come to the end of this chapter, which has been very brief for reasons of time, I note that it seems to have struck the tone of an epitaph.   This is unfortunate, but the conclusion is inescapable: socially and historically speaking, social structures, external and internal domination, vested interests, the mental laziness of the so-called "decision-makers", and contempt for socio-educational communication are some of the factors responsible for the misfortune of belonging to what they call the Third World, a nebulous term that defines nothing except to suggest a place where underdevelopment has reached its extreme.

Social Communication Yesterday and Today

Unhappily, I must say that much of what I have said about development can be said about communication as we know it, what it is, what purpose it serves or does not serve, and who is degrading it. You may think by now, as is your right, that I am not so much skeptical as negative. You may be right, and you may be wrong.   There are times when being negative means being honest with yourself and willing to take stock and correct your course of action.   Can a physician learn by studying healthy bodies in an antiseptic vacuum?

Leaving aside for the moment those exogenous factors which can determine an undesirable form of social communication, we can begin by defining communication from a technical standpoint.

We find, at the outset, that there are many ways of defining the concept of communication, but not what it is and how and where it works. This, I feel, is the important point.   I have the impression that studying the factors (singly or in conjunction) which affect the communication process —audience, objectives, messages, media, interactions, results and effects (not the same thing)— give us a complicated picture of the process which often leads to confusion in actual practice.

1 Romero, José Luis, _Latinoamérica: las ciudades y las ideas_, Siglo Veintiuno, 1976, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

That, I would suggest, may be the reason why communication so often becomes confused and is ultimately ineffective. We simply get into a tangle and fail to identify the elementary "who, what, where, when, how, and why" of the situation. Moreover, we have a tendency to see social communication as something at work urbi et orbi, which is a false premise. We cannot talk about communication per se. Communication has well-defined areas of action, it functions from one point to another, it employs different instruments and attempts to achieve different results, which have a uniform incidence in a broad range of reactions both individual and collective. Since I am trying· to use words to explain something which is not easy to understand, and since visual aids are there for that very purpose, I will use a diagram taken from Sweeney[1] and modified by me to facilitate the explanation. This diagram rather clearly illustrates the role of social communication in a family planning project. I have deliberately refrained from adapting this model to any other area of development, firstly because the example chosen by Szeeney is typical of development, and secondly because I think it would be useful, if this model is applied to any other field of action, for you yourselves to make the adaptation, if only as an exercise.

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1 Szeeney, William O., Personal Communication, Ford Foundation, 1970, New York.

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                        │   COMMUNICATION     │
                        └─────────────────────┘
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         │                                                        │
PUBLIC INFORMATION                                          EDUCATION
(mass communications)

Radio  Press  TV  Publications     FORMAL                        NON-FORMAL

        Promotion                  School-College-University   Clinics   Health-care Programs

        Motivation                 Sex Education               Physio-   Physiology
                                                               logy
        Public Relations           Population Education                  Use of contraceptives

        Advertising                                            Use of    Nutrition
                                                               contra-
        Selling contraceptives                                 ceptives  Mother-child health

                │                                                        Disease prevention
                ▼
        One-way communication                EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

                            Family Planning specifically        Family Planning in relation to
                                                                other development components

                                              Two-way communication
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Is the idea clearer now?

Briefly, the diagram shows that the constituents of communication in a family planning project are public information and education. The latter is in turn broken down into formal and informal or "community" education. Each has its own features.

Would the constituents be the same in, say, an irrigation project? With some appropriate adjustments, I think they would. But since I do not wish to dwell on technical aspects or to prescribe recipes, I shall leave it at that, extending an invitation to you to give it some thought. In doing so I have the conviction that an international civil servant will not be led astray if he forms criteria for his judgements on the basis of an analysis of this diagram. I think the diagram will also prove helpful in giving form to nuances which are not always very clear-cut when we talk about social communication.

I frankly confess that, after having discussed this diagram with Bill Sweeney, I saw with greater clarity details which had not previously occurred to me. My thanks to Bill once again.

I think we can now define communication as a process of social interaction through which people exchange and share diverse experiences, which mutually influence their conduct or behavior. Simplifying this, I prefer to say that communication is creating ideas; to make it social, they must be shared.

Díaz Bordenave[1] points to a direct link between communication and development. This is an aspect of communication which deserves somewhat fuller treatment. Díaz dwells on the urgency of defining roles rather than concepts; and he does so with a specific proposal. According to his idea, some of the new functions of communication should be the following:

- to facilitate interpersonal communication;
- to develop intellectual abilities;
- to facilitate the development of the critical faculty (development of the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood, so that the population can be immunized against demagogic manipulation and authoritarian indoctrination);
- to enable leaders to communicate with each other on equal terms (a respectful and competent dialogue with the population, in order to overcome paternalism and authoritarianism and encourage the solution of problems).

Beltrán[2] poses the communication-development question in different terms, but his view is similar to that of Diaz Bordenave: "...organized collective interaction, mass mobilization and global participation in the decision-making process with regard to issues of public interest can only occur through communication." In the case of Latin America, unfortunately, interaction yields negative results, and this is even more the case when development is confused with modernism, which is a source of dependency, consumerism, mental sterility, and other highly undesirable developments. These are the endogenous variables.

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1 Díaz Bordenave, op. cit.
2 Beltrán, Luis Ramiro, "Comunicacion y modernizacion: significacion, papeles, y estrategias" (Communication and modernization: meaning, roles, and strategies), MSc thesis, Dept. of Communication, Michigan State University, Michigan, 1968.

Boyd[1] undertakes a more specific analysis of interaction and introduces new variables which deserve serious consideration. "...only in rare cases," he writes, "does the planning of development and the design of projects take into account an analysis of the factors that enter into human communication. How many development projects are based on careful study of what could be called 'human viability' rather than only technical and economic viability? In reality people, as the protagonists and recipients of development, have not been given as much attention as roads, dams, fertilizers, tractors, and other creations of modern technology." With regard to human communication, he adds, there are at least three aspects which represent "lost development opportunities", namely "the lack of communication; poor communication; and confused communication."

To this list we should add omissions, distortions, and rejections. Then we would have a brief but almost complete picture of the reasons for our status as members of "the Third World", our uninfluential position on the map of the world.

I fear that I have gone a little beyond a simple definition of communication. But for my present purposes, this will be enough, although in the following chapters I shall try to deal in greater depth with the problems directly related with the operational phase of communication.

[1] Boyd, Paul D., "Causas del descuido de las comunicaciones en la planificacion del desarrollo y remedios para las mismas" (Causes of neglect of communications in development planning, and remedies) in Information for Development Purposes in the Caribbean Region, Guyana, 1974.

Communication as a Component of Development Projects

In view of the diminished status enjoyed by the field of communications among
official circles, and given the pattern of domination which today prevails in the
media of Latin America, it is of dubious value to engage in a discussion of communication
as a   component of development projects. But something has to be done. The question
is what to do.

I once read --I am afraid I do not recall the source-- that the effectiveness
of the managerial function can be measured by the quantity and quality of information
generated, internally and externally, during a given time. How much information
have we as communicators generated to demonstrate the importance of communication
as part of development projects? How much have the analysts done? Please note that
I refer to information, not communication.

But will information enable us to point up the need for including communication
as a substantial component of development projects? I believe so. Moreover, I would
say that only information can help us to reach that goal. Interpersonal, group, and
collective communication. Up to date information, based on reliable statistics
and expressing results of experiences in countries, regions, and throughout the world.
Information backed up by demonstrations of methods and results. Persistent, systematic,
planned information.

For example, interpersonal information should aim exclusively at "selling the idea" to the national leaders with the greatest political influence. Group information should be addressed to legislators and public officials who can approve budgets, exert pressures, or carry out projects, and to opinion leaders who have access to the media and are read, listened to, or seen over the media, where they enjoy some measure of credibility among people in search of information. Collective information should be addressed to the "everyman" of the rural and urban community, aiming specifically at securing grass-roots support for policy decisions favorable to the idea of socio-educational communication.

A question arises at this point: who would be the people best suited to carry out these ideas? For the moment, I can offer no answer. But why not apply ourselves, here and now, to finding an answer?

The people I have in mind would be national leaders in the field of formal and non-formal education; rural schoolteachers; agricultural extension workers; home improvement workers; sanitation workers; priests; directors of collective information media; and --of course-- yourselves, and our other colleagues working for other international agencies.

Like Ordóñez,[1] the thought also occurs to me that there are no definite communication policies which incorporate communication into general planning by countries and which link communication problems to the processes of development and

1 Ordóñez Andrade, Marco, "La Planificación de la Comunicación en Sociedades en Cambio" (Communications Planning in a Changing Society), in Seminario Latinoamericano sobre Politicas Nacionales de Comunicacion en America Latina (Latin-American Seminar on National Communication Policies), Cuadernos CEDAL, San José, Costa Rica 1975.

social change. According to Fox Cardona[1] a national communication policy should be taken to mean "an integrated, explicit, and continuing set of principles and rules applying to institutions centrally involved in a country's social communication process." I have underscored the concept which I feel places the whole in perspective, and I of course agree with the definition, although I think it might be cast in the singular rather than in the plural.

Hancock[2], quoted by Diaz Bordenave and Martins de Carvalho[3] offers a list of principles pertaining to policy and decision-making, some of which I list below:

- A project must have status, influence, and conviction; i.e. it must be taken seriously by political circles in the country.

- A project is not an independent entity; it must establish for itself an identity and a functional relationship with other projects in related fields.

- Much depends on identifying and recruiting a person or persons with great leadership qualities to guide and promote a project in its formative stages.

- All entities interested or involved in a project should participate in policy formulation.

- Project beneficiaries should take part in decision-making.

- Discussions on policy and decision-making should proceed at appropriate levels of representation.

- Policy making must be flexible; it cannot be overly systematic.

1 Fox de Cardona, Elizabeth, "Politicas Nacionales de Comunicacion" (National Communication Policies) in Seminario Latinoamericano sobre Politicas Nacionales de Comunicacion en America Latina (Latin-American Seminar on National Communication Policies) CEDAL, San Jose, Costa Rica, 1975.
2 Hancock, Alan: UNESCO technical officer.
3 Diaz Bordenave & Martins de Carvalho, H., op. cit. p.241.

Concurring with Hancock, Wilder[1] affirms that "the communications media function optimally when they are used in co-ordination with a firm, planned program of person-to-person communication by field workers, other adult education programs, and schools."

The real and inescapable fact is that, as Fox de Cardona says in the work cited, "communication is a necessary and useful public service and, as such, should be placed in the service of the entire population, without excluding or discriminating against any part of it. This is not possible without a policy reflecting the express will of the country and the State to that effect."

In the light of the foregoing considerations, I think that, in order to give communication the character of a development project "component", it is advisable to have the legal backing of an express policy in that field. But we should not sit back and wait for a law of that kind if it is within our power to forge ahead with things that technicians, politicians, or project planners fail to grasp, even though they are simple enough to be understood by a field worker. Some material has been published on this point, and I recommend the work I have cited by Ordoñez Andrade and Fox Cardona as particularly compendious and readable.

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[1] Wilder, Frank, Información, enseñanza, y comunicación en la planificación familiar, Compiled by Johnson, Wilder, and Bogue. Diana Publishers, Mexico City, 1976. (Information, Teaching, and Communication in Family Planning)

I should also like to call your attention to the views of Sommerland[1], which could give rise to some confusion. In his opinion, "the ways of using communication, the channels through which it flows, the structures of the communications system, the regulatory framework, and the decisions of those in charge of the communications system, are all the results of communications policies." A communication policy, strictly in terms of its intention, can never be conceived simply as a set of isolated, ad-hoc, and sometimes actually distorted, rules. That is a way of thinking which tends to confuse the implicit with the explicit.

One point at which we can see a barrier arising in respect of population policy and particularly as regards the effectiveness of communication as a development project component, is in the absence of State-controlled media and the dearth of specialized bureaus to investigate the needs and expectations of the population. In this connection Beltran feels that "Latin-American States do not generally have satisfactory and effective communication media to enable the government to maintain close links with the people and encourage and strengthen development programs and activities. The few that do exist function within the same framework as the private mass media.

"The State lacks a system for continuously detecting the needs, aspirations and reactions of the people. Under those circumstances, it does what it deems best and has no way of determining quickly and systematically whether something has been done well or poorly. Development programming and evaluation are, under such circumstances, more a matter of improvisation and conjecture than a scientific process of measuring and projecting the national development effort."[2]

1 Sommerland, E. Lloyd, op. cit., p.7.
2 Beltran, L. R., Communication in Latin America: Persuasion for the Status Quo or for National Development, Michigan, 1970.

In some countries where specialized governmental offices have been established to monitor the needs and aspirations of the people and facilitate policy decisions, the aim of public service has been undermined by turning these offices into centers for political promotion, since they are used largely for the purpose of creating a favorable image of the leaders or political parties in power.
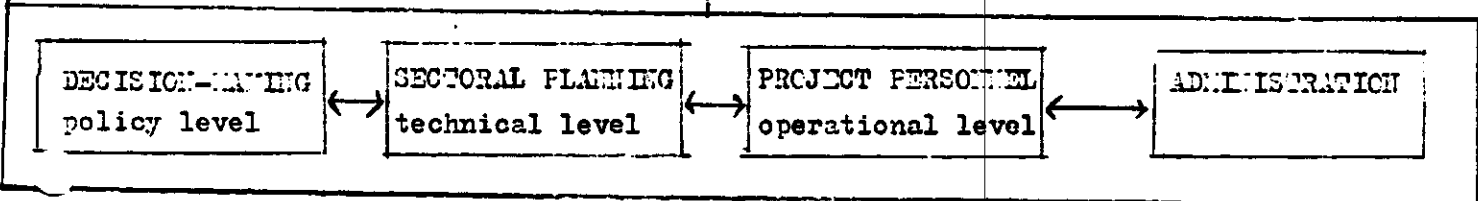
In 1974 Costa Rica created the Oficina de Informacion de la Casa Presidencial, or Presidential Information Service. One of its functions was ± to investigate people's opinions about their needs and possible solutions. It was to be an effective governmental medium of communication between the government and the governed, as well as a promotor of popular participation in development programs. Within a few years, however, this office had become a public-relations bureau for the state and para-statal institutions. It also turned to conducting public opinion surveys to determine the people's x attitude toward the President and his administration.

Personally, I feel that the lack of State machinery is not an insurmountable barrier. There remains open the possibility of hiring the necessary services, which in some circumstances is better than owning the media, from an economic and labor standpoint. The real barrier lies in the lack of specialized personnel and services capable of determining with scientific precision what the people need and want in fulfilling their aspirations. I refer, of course, to those countries where public opinion counts.

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         ┌──────────────────────┐
         │ NATIONAL DEVELOP-    │
         │ MENT   POLICY        │
         └──────────────────────┘
              │    ↑
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         │ NATIONAL COMMUNI-   │
         │ CATIONS POLICY       │
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              │    ↑
              ↓    │
         ┌──────────────────────┐
         │ SECTORAL   STRUCTURES │
         └──────────────────────┘
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| DECISION-MAKING policy level | ↔ | SECTORAL PLANNING technical level | ↔ | PROJECT PERSONNEL operational level | ↔ | ADMINISTRATION |

Our analysis shows —brief though it is— that social communication is a complex activity, in its individual, collective, and structural aspects. There are, so to speak, no loose ends. The machinery has to work in an orderly, systematic way, along channels that lead to a given point. Consequently, communication is something that cannot be left to conjecture or impulse.

Communication will not have its due place, its clear and consistent role in the institutional scheme, so long as it is not included as a basic component of national development projects and, as such, endowed with specialized personnel, its own budget, and influence at the decision-making levels.

Unless we are talking in purely conjectural terms, this must mean, in the first place, the existence of an entity in charge of national communication policy, with the involvement of certain sectoral structures organized in such a way as to interact systematically. Each structure, in turn, would have its policy-making organ (policy level), a planning unit (technical level), a project execution staff (operational level, including workers), and an administrative support staff (personnel, services, supplies, and budget management).

All of this could be graphically represented as follows:

To make co-ordination possible among the sectoral structures, and above all to make it effective, projects should be integrated in order to bring them into line with previously established objectives. It follows that the national decision-making entity should designate an entity, committee, or branch at the sectoral level to take charge of this co-ordinating-supervisory function.

Some questions arise which we should perhaps answer here and now, at this seminar. For example:

- What may be the communication functions of those involved at each level?
- Should there be a specialized communicator at each level indicated?
  If so, what would be their specific duties?
- To whom should the co-ordinating entity be responsible and how often should it report?

Personally, I am optimistic about the functioning of a communication structure such as the one I am suggesting. I believe development projects would be directed along a new, more orderly, more effective course, one with greater impact in every respect.

But I am pessimistic about the fact that, at certain levels, notably at the technical level, there might be some feeling of mistrust about being surrounded in one's work by a systematic network of communication. I am also pessimistic at the prospect that budgetary problems might be invoked, although this would merely be a pretext, for communication can be systematized with no additional cost, or very little. What I mean is that what countries are spending on propagandistic publicity and advertising, which is generally a great deal, could be earmarked for communication, at least in a reasonably balanced proportion.

Here again questions arise. Why do structures of this kind not exist? Without trying to list all the possible reasons, here are some:

- Decision-makers may have no idea of the role which socio-educational communication plays in national development.
- Even with such knowledge, it may also be that they do not have a positive attitude with regard to its benefits.
- A third reason may be that we, the communicators, have not managed to convince the powers-that-be that communication is more constructuve than propaganda and that, in the end, it is more "image-building" than propaganda itself.

I am sure there are other reasons for apathy and inaction, which you will detect if you find it useful to pursue the matter and give it some thought. The thrust of this discussion, I believe, is to "sell" the idea that every public service institution should have a communication policy backed up and guided by a centralized national policy, and supported by a philosophy consistent with the goals and principles of national development. Including communication in development projects is an aspect crucial to development itself. UNICEF should be commended for airing this issue and striving to make ideas into realities.

Communication Planning

It may seem out of place to deal with communication planning here since
the topic being addressed is a general critical overview of social communication
in Latin America. However, I do not see how social communication can be discussed
critically if the discussion is confined to some factors while others are left
out, for the whole is the sum of all the parts.

Let me recall what I said at the beginning: success in support communcations
for development is directly linked to a number of factors. I have discussed
some of these without mention of planning, because I felt that planning is not
so much a factor as a prerequisite of effective communication.

I will not, of course, attempt to deal with the entire topic. But I think
it may be useful to make some comments relating to certain   basic elements
which make the planning exercise a fruitful task. These are planners, participation,
training, the traditional elements of the planning process, research, and certain
details which tend to be overlooked. I shall be as brief as possible.

My friend, teacher, and colleague at this seminar, Juan Diaz Bordenave,
once used a diagram which I would like to borrow now with his permission, to
illustrate why some projects fail:
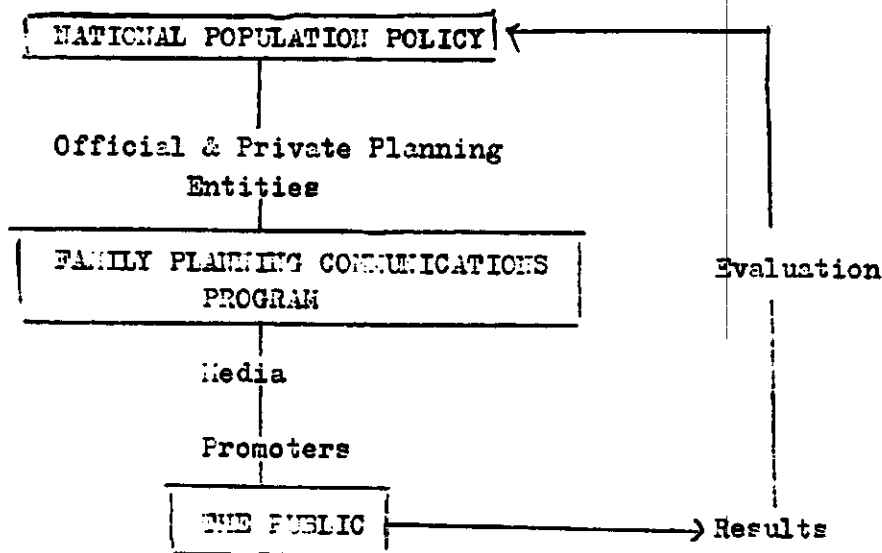
- Step one: the Government enacts a population law. In other words, it adopts a policy relating to population.

- It creates executive machinery, defining staffing requirements, appointing personnel, acquiring equipment, and training cadres to carry out the policy adopted.

- The cadres design communication programs which then make use of the available media and produce a variety of materials.

- The target audience, generally on a nationwide scale, is informed and asked to visit family planning centers and adopt family planning practices.

- After some time has elapsed, an evaluation is carried out and it is found that the results are not encouraging. In fact, it is found that reactions were often negative.

- What has happened? What are the causes for the situation now faced?

What has happened is that the implementation of the program was flawed by serious deficiencies from the start, and the consequences were quickly revealed. The diagram seems simple but does not even come near to reflecting the complexity of the problem. The planners glossed over that complexity. They did not take into account psycho-sociological, cultural, and environmental factors, and accordingly proceeded to lay down a communication program which was unreal, inconsistent, and ineffectual.

In particular, they placed too much faith on collective communication. And they failed throughout to bear in mind that media, of whatever kind, have very specific functions.

In short, the missing link in this diagram was research. Research was needed to identify the problem, analyze it, and apply appropriate remedies. This is, in a sense, what a doctor does: he examines the patient, arrives at a diagnosis, analyzes it, and makes a prescription.

Steps in Communication Planning

Planning involves at least three stages or steps which require careful consideration. The first requires preliminary study in order to ascertain whether the need creating the problem is really felt by the community and, if so, whether its magnitude calls for corrective action.

The second consists of considering the viability of the action from the operational point of view: availability of budgetary resources, qualified human resources, a minimum of infrastructure, a perception of the problem by the community, and possible participation.

The third step consists of operational planning proper, and calls for consideration of at least the following factors:

1. The problem. Diagnosis and analysis of the diagnosis.
2. The target audience.
3. General and specific objectives.
4. Media. Availability and facilities for their utilization, considered in the light of the characteristicsof the audience, the proposed objectives, and the infrastructure.
5. Thematic plan (relevant points of the problem).
6. Messages (design, testing, production, distribution, utilization, and evaluation).
7. Results over a given period. Effects over the medium and long term.
8. Evaluation.
9. Follow-up.

Socio-educational communication combines processes and techniques without losing sight that both are factors that can be brought to fruition only if we see the human person, with his values, beliefs and attitudes, as the first of our concerns. Consequently the process and the techniques used to further it will be severely limited if the approach is _inductive,_ or "vertical". Better results can be expected if it is _deductive_, that is, if it is conducive to an awareness of the issues, democratic participation without constraints, and respect for people's beliefs, values and attitudes. You will all recall Paulo Freire's thinking on that score: "No one teaches anything. No one learns alone. We all learn from each other."

Only if we proceed along this line of thinking, viewed in its broadest human dimensions, will we have planners, technicians, field workers, and an audience better equipped to bring about social change, which is the _raison d'être_ of our pursuits and activities, whether as people or as part of an institution.

Setting Goals

Although all aspects of planning are important, I should like to give added emphasis to point 3 in the third stage of planning, namely setting goals. The communication planner must carefully analyze a given project and then identify its institutional, operational, and communications objectives. The institutional and operational goals of a project are not the same thing as the communication goals.

Quite a few communication plans (and the many messages they comprise) end in failure because they never get beyond the stage of amassing a disparate compendium of ideas that cannot be clearly and precisely placed in their respective contexts, institutional, technical-operational, or communications. An effective message must supply answers to individual or collective motivations. The jumble-message never provides answers.

It is for a good reason that "marketing" goals in commercial advertising make specific reference to sales. Publicity goals, on the other hand, are not expressed in "marketing" terms even when there is a direct relationship by content.

Perhaps I should have begun with this definition. It may be useful to report to you that, in the course of 10 years of work in nearly every country of Latin America, I have always found that professional communications practitioners were unable to say precisely what the difference was between institutional goals, operational goals, and communication goals, as if therein lay the most arcane mystery of the social sciences.

I also found difficulty in understanding and recognizing that socio-educational communication is only one of the various forces that intervene to change behavior and decision-making patterns. From that fact the obvious inference is that it is fallacious to conclude that there is a unique causal link between communication and the degree of achievement of institutional goals.

Not only is communication not the only factor in the formula; we cannot even claim that it is the most important. If we follow a realistic theory we must agree that the most important factor is the project itself, its technical and human viability, how strongly it is needed, how compassionate it is, and the degree of satisfaction-reward it represents for the community, for it is ultimately the community that must accept or reject it.

With your permission, I would like to delve a little more deeply into this matter of goals.

As communicators we usually find ourselves working with communications goals that are more or less well defined and sometimes only implicit. We tend to forget the goals of other areas vital to the development project —not deliberately, but simply because we feel we can do without them in our work. We should acknowledge that this is true.

I would like to propose that we try to break away from this pattern. I suggest that we analyze the traditional approach and look for a new focus and new ways or proceeding.

Let us begin from the premise that projects, all projects, have, explicitly or implicitly, at least three types of basic objectives.

Objective No.1 is the basic objective of the agency —in the present case, UNICEF.

Objective No. 2 is the operational objective of each individual project.

Objective No. 3 is the communication objective within each project.

These are, so to speak, time-bound objectives, for they are fulfilled at different stages of the project's execution from its design to its conclusion (if educational projects can be said to have a conclusion).

Objective No. 1 is what we might call the fundamental objective. It can be so termed because it defines UNICEF's reason for being. It has very clear-cut characteristics; it is permanent and does not change according to time and place.

Objective No. 2 has different characteristics: it is not permanent and it changes with the conclusion of the project that created it. As a general rule, the objective is known to many as the operational objective. For reasons which are more budgetary than technical (national projects are financed by annual budgets) it is accepted practice that projects should be of 1 year's duration, although some can only achieve lasting results over the long term. The fact is that, even if they continue to be formally in effect, objectives tend to shift, largely in response to political, economic, and technical factors.

As an operational activity, a well-executed project should lead to the achievement of results foreseen in the proposed objectives. These objectives are evaluated at the conclusion of the project even if there have been mid-point evaluations (which are technically necessary).

In other words, an operational objective is fulfilled when the declared aim is accomplished, i.e. when there is a quantifiable and measurable result, whether it be tangible or not. An example of the fulfillment of such an operational objective would be the building of a health-care center.

Objective No. 3 would the the specific communication objective.
It is related to Objectve No. 2 in that it would bring the community messages
that begin by addressing an uninformed audience and proceed through a number
of stages until they have generated a state of mind favorable to action in
furtherance of the project. This is done through a strategy of participatory
communication which uses democratic means to appeal to conscience, never resorting
to manipulation or physical or psychological coercion.

He could go further here by drawing up a list of communication techniques
for putting such a strategy into practice, but that is not within the scope of
the present paper.

The communication objective can be distinguished from the operational
objective in several respects, but the main difference is that, besides contributing
to the achievement of immediate results, it achieves effects which may be lasting
and, in a way, more significant than the results.

Let us return to the example of building a health-care center. In this
example, the communication objective is pursued through several stages and
yields various results. For example:

BEFORE - It arouses interest in the project and rallies community support.
It enlists participation which takes the form of a variety of suggestions
as to location, space, unexpected expedients, and psychological support.
All of this seems to fall under the category of motivation.
DURING - It secures material contributions and volunteer work.
It includes observation of progress and giving recognition for advances made.
AFTER - At this stage, the fulfillment of the objective is revealed in
effects. Even in the case of a material project, the technical outcome will
be optimal to the extent that the target audience has been prepared, mentally,
emotionally, and physically, by means of communication, to adopt behavior
favorable to change and then to act in a given direction, as a result of
freely gained understanding.

It is therefore a matter of attaining an institutional objective —that of UNICEF in this case— through the achievement of an operational objective of a technical character —this constituting the project's immediate result— with the support of communication objectives taking the form of messages designed to elicit critical awareness and reasoning ability and to be consistent with given realities and expectations (long-term educational effect).

Under optimal conditions, the communication objective throughout the three stages should be such as to help people to acquire knowledge (knowing), to develop an attitude favorable to change (wanting), and to take action (being capable).

The foregoing suggests that the communication objective seeks to produce changes in people's behavior with respect to what they think, what they feel and do, and what they feel their needs to be.

Let us try to simplify this model along the following lines:

1. INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVE – giving shape to a particular project in the context of an institutional philosophy and policy (e.g. those of UNICEF), in a manner consistent with the national development policy.

2. OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVE – gaining the approval and support of the people for a given innovation, project, service, idea, technique, practice, etc.

3. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVE – stimulating awareness among the people with a view to enabling them to judge as to the desirability of the project, enlisting their active participation as the project proceeds, and taking an action-oriented decision, —in short, enabling people to support the project, to learn of the advantages it may hold (adoption) and to take advantage of them freely and knowledgeably.

Questions could arise at this point such as the following: How does this communication strategy? What can be achieved with this model?

The answers might be numerous and could open up new prospects for guiding future action. But I would rather leave it to you to discover these if you feel it is a worthwhile exercise.

We can say, by way of a corollary, that in development-oriented activities the communication component with its socio-educational function is what ultimately gives a human dimension to the technological enterprise, whatever the field of work may be.

Although the scientific frame of mind is loath to accept the obvious (and it must be if it is to remain scientific) there are always exceptions. If I adopt the well-disposed tolerance that is proper to scientists, I can see something in the above conclusions that is obvious. I can see people as the actors, agents, and beneficiaries of development, as the result of a clear, definite, and logical articulation of the three basic objectives of a project.

The Planners

It is clear that the political, cultural, and economic dominance of which we are the victims prevents us, in large measure, from using communication as a springboard in taking the leap toward development. But we cannot really complain. If we do not wish to deceive ourselves, we must recognize that we are not doing —and sometimes are not even trying to do— things as they should be done. Development planners, for their part, are more concerned about their usually blurred political image and about the carpeting in their offices, than they are about "seeing" people —above all, avoiding conversation with them as part of their routine.

In reference to this situation, Boyd[1] affirms that many planners suffer
from econometric near-sightedness —i.e. they fail to see the cost-benefit
gain that can be made by mobilizing and motivating people to become fully
involved in their own development. This blind-spot prevents the experts from
perceiving the link between the human factor and technical success. There is
a widespread tendency now in each discipline to adopt the capricious and arbitrary
assumption that human beings are composed of compartments called "health",
"education", "nutrition", and so forth, and this prevents us from understanding
that the human person is an organic whole which must be dealt with comprehensively.
We do not agree that the human person can be completely accounted for in terms of
everyday existence, embracing the tribulations of the day and expectations for
tomorrow. No one will prevent us from making scientific divisions. But what
have we achieved? We have only failed to understand people by treating them
more or less as mechanical toys.

But are we going to lay all the blame on the planners? Are we, as communications
practitoners, free of all sins?

Many of us have a tendency to go directly to collective communication,
shirting prior steps such as direct contact with leaders and agents of change
in the field. We are seduced by gadgetry, utilizing it sometimes in completely
incongruous ways. The more sophisticated the gadget the more pleased we are,
and it is unforgivable that we should neglect contents, messages, and psycho-
sociological principles that have governed communications since its inception.

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1 Boyd, Paul D., op. cit. pp. 3-4.

Others set to work busily producing posters, booklets, audio-visual aids, etc., as if there were any truth to the idea that "you can't get enough of a good thing". Still others decide to do nothing at all, because there's no budget. The point I wish to make is that social communication must contend with many barriers: those imposed on us by outside structures, those raised by technology, and those of our own making, which arise through neglect or through lack of proper training.

But there is a further point. Saunders[1] points to some other limitations which can be laid to planners, technicians, and practitioners. According to this author, whose experience in communications is perhaps the soundest to be found, the communications technology now available is adequte for the job to be done. However, there is a great imbalance between the technology and the degree of commitment.

Commitment

The lack of commitment to our goals is evident in every sphere, from the university down to the field-work level. There are no communications policies, but there are not enough professional communicators either. I cannot quote figures in support of this statement, but I suspect that there are more academics —with Masters or PhD degrees— than there are communicators at the base with some degree of expertise and experience, working full time. Owing to the short-sightedness of some senior officials in international organizations, the only three projects which were devoted to training communication practitioners in the context of international programs have ceased to exist.

1 Saunders, Lyle, "Communications Issues," in International Workshop on Communications in Family Planning Programs, Final Report, Robert R. Blake ed., Carolina Population Center, U. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N. Carolina 1970.

I refer to the now defunct Centro Interamericano de Adiestramiento en Comunicadion para Poblacion, CIACCP, (Interamerican Center for Training in Communications for Population Activities), which operated in Costa Rica, to the comparable program offered by the University of Chicago, and to that of the East-West Communications Institute of the University of Hawaii. The Servicio de Intercambio Cientifico del Instituto Interamericano de Ciencias Agricolas (Scientific Exchange Service of the Interamerican Institute of Agronomy) of the OAS, based in Turrialba, Costa Rica, had also ceased to exist before these.

There is commitment, of course, but it is a kind of commitment which is tied up with "image-making" in every field. There is commitment the production of goods and the fabrication of falsehood, not to communication in support of development.

Resources

In communication, as in any other activity, return is usually commensurate with investment. Small investments mean limited gains. Businesses that do not advertise soon face hard times or disappear. Industries that advertise tend to grow. There are human, economic, and material resources, and no one can function without the others.

Professionalism

Communication is a professional function which should be entrusted to trained individuals with experience in the various aspects of development. It comes as no surprise that in Latin America even the major media face a scarcity of experts in given areas of development. We tend to disregard the potential for creativity that exists in the advertising agencies, in the radio and television studios, and among members of the press and graduate university faculties.

Incongruous though it may seem, there exist some limited possibilities to obtain academic training in social communication; on the other hand, there is little or no opportunity to obtain training as a practitioner in the field. Here again, the histories of CIACOP, Chicago, and Hawaii are to the point.

Training

I have been particularly struck by a fact which I shall —perhaps generously— refer to as singular. Most international organizations which support development generally have a genuine interest in furthering the attainment of objectives for the common good. With that end in view they invest funds —at times substantial— for the development of a variety of projects. Counterpart national agencies indicate what they need, when, and where.

But, curiously enough, there are instances in which the counterpart agencies do not request systematic training for specific projects and the international organizations do not take care to verify that there are professional communicators among the personnel for the projected operation. Not that seminars, workshops, and training programs are not organized, or fellowships for the purpose not granted. Of course they are. But —there's always a "but"— how many of these activities are designed to advance a specific project?

I recall, in this connection, and without exaggeration, being invited
to a course in trade-unionism in Germany, being asked to make an observation
tour of the United States to take note of the machinery for personnel selection
in certain industries,   being invited to take a course in   applied
educational techniques for the medical sciences, and so forth.

I have my own ideas about instruction and training. They are not altogether
original, of course. But I do feel that they are nonetheless valid. I think,
for example, that training activities should be preceded by a very careful
selection of the trainees. Within a single project, of whatever kind, we can
find what I call generators, continuers, activators-legitimators, and producers
in the field of communication, without including in these areas the professional
communicators.

I have prepared a typology of communicators, presented below, taking as
established the premise that those who use communication as a basic working
tool, whatever their field, are communicators and need training.

Typology of Communicators

1. **Generators** (policy level)

    - Ministers of State

    - Vice-Ministers of State

    - Ministerial Counselors

    - Department Heads

    - Project Directors

    - Programming specialists

    - Budget Officers

2. **Continuers** (technical level)

    - Supervisors

    - Co-ordinators

    - Technicians (e.g. engineers, physicians, etc.)

    - Nurses

    - Nurses' aides

    - Social Workers

    - Health Educators

    - Nutritionists

    - Agricultural extension workers

    - Agronomists

    - Economists

    - Urban planners

    - Ecologists

    - Psychologists

    - Sociologists

    - Home Improvement Workers

3. <u>Activators-Legitinators</u> (operational level)

- Public relations workers

- National, regional, local leaders

- Natural and formal leaders

- International leaders

- Educators

- Advertising workers

- Survey workers

- Editors of publications

- Welfare interviewers

- Newswriters (for press, radio, and television)

- Agronomists

- Pharmacists

- Nurses

- Clergymen

- Field workers (door to door)

- Agricultural extension workers

- Midwives

- Volunteers

3. <u>Producers</u> (specialized technical level)

- "Creative workers" (producing written, visual, or oral messages)

- Script-writers (for radio, television, and visual presentations)

- Draftsmen

- Narrators

- Sound engineers

- Editors

- Photographers

This list, of course, is intended as nothing more than a point of departure, a guide in the task of painstakingly defining the specific functions of each individual, and those of people who, by force of circumstances, are sometimes called upon to act as "generalists". Each communicator takes his place at his own level in terms of his particular functions, producing results which vary with individual objectives.

Thus, for instance, the "generators" can deploy their activity in an unrestricted dimension, while the "continuers", for their part, have a more limited scope and one which differs from that of the "activators", who are confined to very   closely circumscribed areas or fields. The producers, in turn, act as specialized auxiliaries necessary for the other categories of the typology.

In an orderly and systematic training program, applicant trainees should be selected from a list such as the one described, not by "dead reckoning", as tends most often to be the case.

Organization

Following Saunders's line of thinking, it must be recognized that, with some very narrowly circumscribed exceptions, Latin American countries do not possess entities charged with regulating social communication. Each sector tends to have its own communication structure and manages it without reference to other related sectors.

What is the reason for this lack of organization? I will not pretend to have the answer to that question, but it should be pointed out that here again the   internal   structures of official and private entities have a hand in the matter. Ministers of State, for example, are political entities, in the restricted sense given the word in Latin America. Technical experts claim to have their own problems and dismiss communication. The communicators themselves plead lack of funding and time. And so on and so forth.

Perhaps this situation, which I have experienced personally, also underlies the trend toward jumbled messages I described earlier.

Participation

According to Roux[1] community participation does not readily emerge of
its own accord. Motivation and persuasion are necessary at first to mobilize
the people, and they must afterwards be given continuing stimulation. Most
individuals will not participate in community activities unless they can
perceive some direct benefit. Individualism must be taken as a social fact,
and it is ingenuous to believe that voluntary co-operation is easy to achieve,
especially in health activities, since, as Gladstone[2] observes, people tend to
look after their health only when they are sick.

Although emphasis has been placed on the fact that "without the participation
of the local population, health services are unable to respond to the changing
needs of the population"[3], community participation has usually been reduced to
mere utilization of trained local personnel as auxiliaries.

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1 De Roux, Gustavo I., op. cit., p. 12.
2 Gladstone, I., "Motivation and Health Education", in _American Journal of_
  Public Health, vol. 39, 1949.
3 Pan-American Health Organization, _Guía para la Organización de Servicios de_
  Salud en Areas Rurales y la Utilización de Personal Auxiliar (Guide for the
  Organization of Health Services in Rural Areas and for the Use of Auxiliary
  Personnel), scientific publication No. 290, Washington, 1974.

"However," the PHO adds, "we have the experience of Guatemala, where the community does participate, and also selects or disqualifies the health auxiliary through a committee that also takes charge of monitoring sales of drugs and program expenses, and organizing activities designed to benefit agriculture and cottage industries."[1]

Diaz Bordenave[2], in an analysis of participation and its determining factors, quotes Barbano[3], who refers to "three contexts of differing sociological characteristics: being part of something; having a part in something; and taking part in something." Another author, Tomasetta[4], explains that "the first context refers to a _status_ which can be granted or withdrawn; the second, a _function_ which may be active or passive; the third, a direct action."

From the foregoing, Diaz Bordenave indicates, it can be inferred that participation has certain determining factors which are in themselves varied and rather complex. He adds that, like communication, it is associated with man's social nature. But, also as with communication, participation can be deliberately promoted and guided.

Theoretically, Barbano stresses, an individual may find himself in any one of those three contexts; in practice, this may not always be so, for the sociological conditions of participation depend on a threefold set of factors: (a) on the make-up and structure of the social fabric, (b) on the organization and activities of political and trade-union associations, and (c) on the means of integration and values of the social system. In this regard Tomasetta notes, still on the quotation from Diaz Bordenave, "The problem of participation, then, is not one

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1 PHO, _Medical Auxiliaries_, Washington, 1973.
2 Díaz Bordenave, Juan, "Aspectos politicos e implicaciones politicos de la comunicación participatoria" (Political aspects and political implications of participatory communication) in _Primer Seminario Latinoamericano de Comunicación Participatoria_, Quito, Ecuador, 1978.
3 Barbano, F., "Condizioni e Forme della Participazione," in _Temni Moderni_ No.1, 1962.
4 Tomasetta, L., _Participación y autogestión_, Oxford U. Press, New York 1964.

of the quantity of those <u>taking part</u> but of the quality of the part which people <u>have to play</u>. Consistently with Barbano's thinking, the content of 'having a part to play' is linked to 'the opportunity —recognized or claimed— to fulfil a function in the life of a group or community."

According to Meisner[1], also quoted by Díaz Bordenave, participatory behavior is "the result of a number of aspirations, which in turn depend on certain attitudes shaped by a given level of information." In other words, there are certain factors which influence participatory behavior:

- what the individual <u>knows</u>, i.e. how much information he has about the groups in his surroundings in which he could participate;

- what the individual <u>thinks and feels</u>, i.e. his attitudes in judging the activities of the groups;

- what the individual <u>wishes</u>, i.e. his aspirations in terms of a standard of living, what he is working and struggling to achieve;

- what the individual <u>does</u> to participate or not participate.

Bordenave concludes that "communication can be seen to be a powerful influence on participatory behavior, since it influences people's perceptions, information, feelings, aspirations, and decisions."

We should note the striking consistency between the sociological approach described above and the rather more practically-oriented observations of Roux[2] who adds that "motivation to participate in health groups may proceed along one of two lines: individual persuasion, direct or indirect (through lines of opinion or local organizations), or mass persuasion. The latter, which has been successfully used in some community development programs, may involve the danger of arousing expectations which the program or project is not equipped to satisfy."

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1 Meisner, Albert, <u>Animation, Participation, et Développement</u>, Editions Anthropos, Paris, 1965.
2 De Roux, op. cit., p. 12.

He also points out that "it is important to carry out checks on the effectiveness of messages combining health information with agricultural information. Generally, the messages carry more or less unified contents and may therefore fail to attract the attention of those who would have the greatest interest in participating for reasons not mentioned in the message."

According to UNICEF[1], "...although it is true that participation by the community from the very outset is essential to success, there is a prerequisite which must evidently precede the first steps in the operation: a commitment by the national government to adopt the strategy." Of course. Because, in large measure, participation at the base will depend on attitudes in the higher echelons. That attitude might be reflected through social communication, but it would be highly desirable for it to be also an attitude of physical presence, one of "being there", of "talking with", and of "showing concern for". In short, cultivating a genuine interest, and showing it.

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1 UNICEF, A Strategy for Basic Services, New York.

Possible Areas of Action for Regional UNICEF Personnel

in Developing Basic Services Projects for Children

Let us now look at things from the specific standpoint of an international
agency seeking to support national efforts to improve the living conditions of
the population. Perhaps the position would be clarified if we asked some
questions such as the following: What can UNICEF do to "participate" effectively
in decisions and in the implementation of national programs in the region?
That question, which doubtless has more than one answer, may already have been
answered by the institution to which you belong. However, I have taken the
liberty of preparing a diagram which may also be useful in answer it, or at least
as a mental exercise:
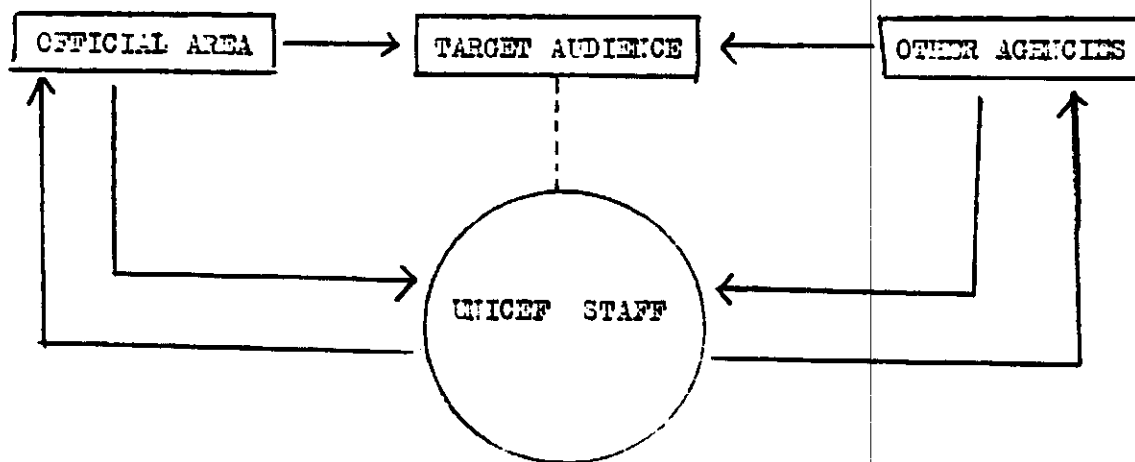
Official Area

1 national development policy (the Government program)

2 programming priorities

3 basic services for children and social development in related fields

4 diagnosis of the problem: magnitude, immediate effects, projections

5 institutional, operational, and communication objectives for each project
and for the problem as a whole

6 official strategy for programming basic services for children

7 active dialogue with senior officials, technicians, and administrators of
services for children and social development in related fields

8 diagnosis of the support-communications situation in each development project
or program, parallel with a complete understanding of specific objectives
in each case.

The point is to have accurate information at hand for each of the eight
items listed under "official area." Being uninformed on any of these points
in fact prevents an international civil servant from finding creative approaches,
from offering timely suggestions, and even from talking knowledgeably about the
problem with the key national official. On the other hand, a knowledge of
political philosophies and activities the nation is pursuing will ensure a
genuine, fruitful dialogue. It will also facilitate action and participation
in the most favorable conditions. Not to mention that, under such circumstances,
the well-informed civil servant will also gain respect and status.

Is this a great deal to ask? Naturally it is. But it is true, as a popular
saying in my country puts it, that one must "be considerate even in giving."
Such consideration is an art, and is even more difficult when the giver comes
from outside and his presence is undermined by the perception that he is just
a bureaucrat cut off from the problems of the country.

Other Agencies

As regards the other agencies engaged in international support work, the
problem may be reduced to one of liaison activities: ensuring co-ordination to
avoid duplication of effort,   looking for opportunities for joint endeavor
(always respecting the basic rules and identity of each party), and a constant
exchange of information to ensure that each agency is advancing in parallel
fashion and to present to the country and the government an image of consistent
and unified inter-agency thinking.

Personally, I attach great importance to this kind of action. Although I
describe it as liaison activity, let me clarify that it involves contacts that
require earnest assessments of opinions, opportunities and strategies in diverse
areas of action that can prove to be complex in practice.

If they can avoid it, international organizations should not go on working
each along its separate ways, as if their purposes and reasons for being were
not in fact very similar.

But you are surely better qualified than I to perceive the desirability of
co-ordinated inter-agency work, as a field of endeavor proper to UNICEF.
I believe that you could also improve the model I have presented here, always
bearing in mind that I refer in particular to communication activities in support
of development.

Target Audience

Although the direct relationship with the audience is not necessarily a
matter of priority, everything that the personnel can do to establish a
relationship people on the scene is bound to be positive. In reality the
importance of this relationship stems from considerations of "image".

You are surely aware that, rightly or wrongly, some international agencies have a negative image of some of our countries, and there have even been cases of offers of assistance being rejected outright. An agency —UNICEF, for example— will find a better reception at the upper echelons of government if it enjoys a degree of support at the base. That, from a disinterested point of view, is the importance of taking this area of action seriously. And this does not for a moment imply that we are casting doubt upon the fact that UNICEF and all the agencies are ultimately operating exclusively with a view to the needs and the advancement of the people of the developing countries.

From a technical standpoint, however, the staff of an international agency should be able to respond to applications for assistance in selecting the target audience for a project. It should also contribute ideas and action in tasks such as the selection of community leaders, community participation, the organization of systems of information feedback, and other similar matters.

CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000224

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000224**

External ID

Title

"Assessment of Social Communication in Latin America and of Some Constraints" Paper presented at the Americas Workshop on Communication for Social Development, held at Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 22-29 April 1981

Date Created / From Date	*Date Registered*	*Date Closed / To Date*
4/1/1981	8/10/2007 at 2:21 PM	

Primary Contact

Home Location **CF-RAF-USAA-DB01-2007-09544 (In Container)**

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Owner Location **Programme Division, UNICEF NYHQ (3003)**

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Date Published

FI3: Record Copy? **No**

Record Type **A01 PD-GEN ITEM**

Contained Records

Container **CF/RA/BX/PD/CM/1985/T035: Programme Support Communications**

Fd3: Doc Type - Format	*Da1:Date First Published*	*Priority*

Document Details **Record has no document attached.**

Notes

Paper by Carlos Cordero Jimenez, 56 pages. The table of contents includes: Towards a frame of reference; the problem; what is development; social communication yesterday and today; communication as a component of development projects; communication planning (steps in communication planning, setting goals, the planners, commitment, resources, professionalism, training, typology of communicators, organization); particpation; possible areas for action ...(official area, other agencies, target audience).

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