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Page 8
Date 9/14/2007
Time 5:29:11 PM

Login Name Saroja Douglas



CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000313

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000313**

External ID

Title

PSC Financial aspects. Reoprt on the Regional Informaation Meeting on Workplans and Budgets 1983-1985, held in Geneva, 28 June - 2 July 1982.

Date Created / From Date

6/1/1982

Date Registered

8/10/2007 at 1:52 PM

Date Closed / To Date

Primary Contact

Home Location **CF-RAF-USAA-DB01-2007-09559 (In Container)**

F12: Status Certain? **No**

Item Fd01: In, Out, Internal Rec or Rec Copy

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

Current Location/Assignee **Upasana Young since 9/15/2007 at 6:44 PM**

9/11/2007 at 12:17 PM

High

F13: Record Copy? **No**

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

Contained Records

Container **CF/RA/BX/PD/CM/1985/T032: PSC Unit, UNICEF Hq, New York. Final**

Date Published

Fd3: Doc Type - Format

Da1: Date First Published

Priority

Record Type **A01 PD-GEN ITEM**

Notes

7 pp. Document to be presented at the Geneva meeting, it reports on the Regional Information Meeting on Workplan and Budgets, Bogota 10-11 June 1982. Expenditure related to information/advocacy should be considered as part of programme co-operation, and not as overhead; this would make available more resources. Greater attention should be paid to distribution of materials, both those produced in the region and elsewhere. There was great demand for Spanish language editions of major publications.

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THE AMERICAS REGIONAL OFFICE

REPORT ON THE REGIONAL INFORMATION
MEETING ON WORKPLANS AND BUDGETS - 1983/1985 ^{1/}

Introduction

1. A two-day meeting (June 10-11, 1982) was held at The Americas Regional Office in Bogotá (TARO) to preview and discuss workplans and budgetary implications of information-communication activities in the Americas Region for 1983, 1984 and 1985. The meeting was a result of an earlier discussion of global information workplans, held at Headquarters in early March, when the need was felt for a better planning process involving all field offices.
2. The meeting in Bogotá was organized in compliance with EXD-2837 of March 19, 1982, in which the Executive Director requests Regional Directors and Representatives to help their information-communication staff develop country and regional programmes. The same EXD instructs Regional Information Officers to assist with the preparation of country-based information-advocacy programmes, and to develop regional plans with the Regional Directors.
3. Within this frame of reference and its requirements, The Americas Regional Director directed the Regional Information Officer to organize the aforementioned event in order to discuss information-communication work in the region. A set of guidelines was jointly prepared by the Regional Information Officer and a Consultant of the Bogotá Office

^{1/} Document to be presented during the Information Planning and Budget Meeting to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from June 28 to July 2, 1982. This draft will be expanded and made more operational as a result of reviews based on comments and suggestions from each Area Office Representative and concerned staff.

to assist information staff in the various offices in reviewing and/or preparing their workplans. The guidelines were part of a kit sent from Bogotá to Area Offices, containing several reference documents, and model data sheets to facilitate the collection of information on work-plans.

4. Despite the shortage of time between the initial preparations and the receipt of the guidelines by the Area Offices (about one month), Representatives lent their full support to the meeting, which was attended by information officers from Kingston, Lima, and Santiago, in addition to the Information Officer of the Bogotá Area Office, who was herself instrumental in organizing the event. The Brasilia Office was represented by its Senior Programme Officer, whose presence served to give information officers the much needed dimension of UNICEF programming as the pivot for information-communication efforts. The México and Guatemala Offices were unable to send representatives to the meeting. However, these two offices submitted written information on their plans, which were taken into consideration for the preparation of this report.
5. The meeting was initiated with a Regional Director's verbal summary which highlighted relevant points which came out during the past Executive Board Session and her first meeting with Area Representatives. These issues included the preparation of the budget, necessary improvements in the management of UNICEF co-operation, knowledge networks, priority areas for UNICEF action in the region and support of TARO to Field Offices through concerted planning efforts similar to this kind of meeting.
6. The meeting also benefitted from the presence of a resource person from Headquarters, Mr. Moncef Bouhafa, Chief, Support Services, Information Division (ID), who explained to participants the budget structure and mechanisms, in addition to briefing the meeting on the uses of the UNICEF Addressing System (UNICAS). He was also very informative on several other matters related to funding sources and staffing alternatives.

7. At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to give written answers to the following two questions aimed at obtaining evaluative comments and suggestions for future events of this kind:
 - (a) What were the perceived benefits of this workshop for your work, for the Area Office you represent, and for the Regional Office?
 - (b) Give your suggestions for future meetings of this kind, such as: when should a future meeting take place, where, with whom, and for what purpose?
8. A listing of the answers to these questions appears at the end of this Report in the form of an Annex.

Conclusions

1. The major conclusions were discussed at the end of the meeting with the active participation of the Regional Director. These could be grouped under the heading of Special Information Needs in the Americas, and were the following:
 - (a) The situation in the Americas and the nature of UNICEF co-operation call for information/advocacy expenditures to be considered as part of programme co-operation, without reducing ceilings, and not as overhead. This could make available more resources for the advocacy work, from 1984/85 onwards, with only moderate increases in the administrative services budgets, as per instructions put forth in Memo CF-82/408 of 21 May 1982 on the Preparation of Budget Estimates for 1982-83 (revised), Estimates for 1984-85 and Projections for 1986-87.
 - (b) The resources for information in the region are relatively weak, and only modest growth can be expected in the biennium. Nevertheless, Area Offices have developed expertise in certain activities, which

could and should be shared as part of the knowledge networks that are contemplated. This may not require more than some additional travel money, as well as some extra consultant time in the Regional Office. For example, Brasilia already has expertise in audio-visual script writing, Lima in audio-visual production, Kingston in preparation of project write-ups, and Santiago in diffusion-distribution schemes and NGO involvement. Area Offices also have already produced materials in such interest areas as Breastfeeding (Brasilia, Santiago, Kingston), Urban Services (Lima, Brasilia), Social Indicators (Brasilia, Santiago, Bogotá), Early Stimulation (Mexico, Guatemala). Other ideas mentioned to foster this cross-fertilisation were a simple newsletter and greater participation at workshops dealing with specific themes. Here, it was felt, there was a great potential role for the Regional Office in identifying and summarizing common programming experiences, and promoting its utilization by Field Offices and HQs. This would call for the preparation of a management plan for the knowledge networks and the co-ordination of their implementation.

- (c) Greater attention will also need to be paid to distribution, both of materials produced within the region and from elsewhere. Rationalizing and sharing of mailing lists at the regional level can help, aided by UNICAS. Audience analysis and studies on the segmentation of target audiences should be undertaken, perhaps by outside specialists, to enable information and programme staff better plan communication inputs for programme support, general advocacy and fund-raising. Santiago's expertise in using redistributors should be used. It follows that consideration should also be given to the need for evaluation of the impact of information-communication efforts, covering not only quantitative but also qualitative aspects.

- (d) The Regional Information Officer can help narrow the gap between the Americas region and HQs given his presence in New York; however, for this to be effective, it should be made clear to the Executive Director that the post should report to the Director of the Information Division on technical matters and, administratively, to the Regional Director in Bogotá, until April 1983. The situation of the post, after April 1983, should also be made clear to HQs.
- (e) An important activity for the Regional Office in 1983 and beyond would be to follow up the useful contacts made at La Rabida (Spain) Seminar with leading Latin America and Caribbean media representatives, since this would affect all the Area Offices in varying degrees.
- (f) Another possible regional priority would be a regional communications project aimed at obtaining an inventory of successful PSC-type efforts that could be shared by Area Offices. Such an inventory should be based on detailed surveys of institutions, materials and experiences in the area of communication for development, to be used as reference by information-communication staff and programme officers, as recommended by the Americas Region Workshop on Communication for social Development held in 1981 in Jamaica.
- (g) On the question of language editions, it was agreed that there was a great demand for a more rationalised and systematic production of Spanish-language editions of major publications, normally funded from HQs, since Spanish is an official UN language. The question of where the production should take place figured prominently, with the agreement that it needs to be addressed at the Geneva meeting, as it may be more logical to have them produced (at less cost) in the region. In addition, it was also agreed that there was a need to produce more materials in Portuguese given the magnitude of

audiences in Brazil, the possibility of using these materials in Africa, and the fact that this issue would be an important one in the plans of the Brasilia Office.

Suggestions and recommendations

1. On the question of staffing, while recognizing that there is room only for modest growth in 1984-85, it was recommended that some key gaps be filled in the staffing pattern for the region, some of them caused by the transfer of the Regional Office this year. Specific recommendations are:
 - (a) While Bogotá should count on having the regional information post and a secretary in 1984-85, the interim period calls for additional short-term consultants to assist the office in the current budget biennium (1982-83);
 - (b) the Regional Director should carefully review the functions of the regional information post with Area Representatives, and communicate a decision to HQs regarding the future of this post after April 1983;
 - (c) the secretarial post in Santiago dependent of the Regional Information Officer, should be transferred to Bogotá rather than be abolished;
 - (d) the Santiago Office has had an information-communication consultant for more than four years on SSA, and this function should be clearly established with a post in 1983, if possible, since neither JPOs nor Interns can be expected to perform the duties required;
 - (e) the Lima Office PSC post, previously International and now National, should be considered for conversion for International in the next budget period.

2. On the question of better planning information-communication inputs in support of programmes, general advocacy and fund-raising, while recognizing that workplan data sheets presented to participants facilitated the planning process, it was recommended that an orientation matrix - such as the one illustrated below - be developed to analyse UNICEF's programme co-operation and facilitate the outlining of objectives and strategies:

Info/Comm Actions Audience Category	Programming <i>Support</i>	Advocacy	Fund-raising <i>Support</i>
Media			
Decision-Makers			
Non-Governmental Organizations			

Public & children

such a matrix should complement the data sheets (sample attached), but these should be modified to also include a brief description of the objectives of the programme that justifies the information-communication activity being contemplated.

3. In addition, it was recommended that Area Offices, especially the two not represented at the meeting (Mexico and Guatemala), be requested to inventory their resources for and major activities in information-communication work, from July 1982 to December 1983, according to the following outline:

(a) Personnel

(b) Technical Resources

- UNICEF (including equipment)
- JPO, etc.
- Local

(c) Financial Resources

- Admin. Budget
- BAL
- Regional (including IFP)
- HQs

(d) Major activities

- Areas of programme priorities
- Others

(e) General observations

(f) Recommendations

4. As to budget implications of information-communication activities, it was recommended that Information Officers should become more conversant with the budget structure and with current instructions on budget submissions (Memo CF-82/408 of 21 May 1982 issued by the Budget Section), and should work more closely with programme staff in planning information-communication inputs with a view to increasingly integrating them into UNICEF's programme co-operation. This exercise would serve

to strengthen BALS while helping curtail expansion of administrative services budgets, whose increases could be circumscribed to travel expenditures (Code 35) and short-term consultancies (Code 02), given the special circumstances created by the transfer of the Regional Office and the specific aims of some information-communication activities being contemplated.

5. Under the heading of budget implications, it was also suggested that the Regional Information Officer attempt to identify, jointly with the pertinent Information Division staff at Headquarters, areas of regional information activities for which global funds could be used in more cost-effective ways, such as that of local production of language versions of major publications. In this regard, the convenience of a visit by the Chief, Editorial and Publications Services, ID-NY, was considered, for the purpose of jointly surveying with the Regional Information Officer and other Regional Office staff the needs and capabilities for local production.

Other issues

1. The meeting generated a series of specific proposals related to policy and operational issues directed at the Regional and Area Offices, which are incorporated under the heading Suggestions and Recommendations. Other ideas of a more general nature were:
 - (a) that Information Officers prepare annual summaries of their activities for their Area Offices;
 - (b) that the Regional Office consider the production of an Intercom-like publication for regional purposes;
 - (c) that ID-NY consider the production of an audio-visual on the functions of information-communication and its potential contribution to programme effectiveness;

- (d) that ID-NY inform in advance of potential activities that may require the Regional or Area Offices involvement, so as to facilitate the preparation of their own workplans;
- (e) that the Regional Office, in consultation with Area Representatives, periodically organize future similar meetings with greater participation of programme staff;
- (f) that future meetings take up issues such as the inclusion of Development Education and Special Events, improving support to GCO, and the need for evaluation of information-communication activities in Office Work Plans;
- (g) that the use of JPOs and local interns, as alternative staffing, be thought out more methodically.

ANNEX II

EVALUATION EXERCISE

Following is an non-reiterative listing of answers provided by participants to questions on how they perceived the benefits of the meeting and on their suggestions for future meetings.

1. Perceived Benefits

- Opportunity to share common concerns, to establish personal contacts, to gain better picture of areas of special interest and expertise, and to reach consensus on important issues.
- Chance to understand needs of the Americas Regional Office, to share experiences, and to develop a team approach in Latin America.
- Opportunity to gain an initial understanding and appreciation of the expertise, experience and resources available in the region.
- Meeting enabled participant to develop a matrix that could be used for identifying communication-information inputs for programme activities, general advocacy, and fund-raising.
- Meeting was extremely valuable since it permitted a fruitful exchange of ideas, concerns and, above all, of information on actions that are taking place in the region, most of which were unknown (to participant).
- Meeting afforded first opportunity in several years for Information Officers in the Americas to discuss workplans and budget structure and procedures.
- Discussions helped to define more clearly the role of the Regional Office in the realm of information-communication work.
- Meeting served to emphasize the trend to concentrate information efforts in support of the country programme.

2. Suggestions for future meetings

- Meetings should be held at least once a year, alternating between Bogotá and each Area Office;

(a) As to periodicity and venue

- Meetings should be held once every year, alternating between Bogotá and each Area Office; next one should be after Board or after Regional Directors Meeting (November). (Only one participant suggested that meetings should be held twice a year, alternating between Bogotá and other Area Offices).

(b) As to organization

- More advance planning and clearer definition of final output.
- Involvement of programme staff in the planning of the meeting.
- Participation of programme staff in future meetings.
- More time should be allowed for discussions.
- Better handling of the workshop to obtain maximum results.

(One Spanish-speaking participant answered that his limited knowledge of English prevented him from participating more actively).

ATTACHMENT

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF INFORMATION WORKPLANS IN THE AMERICAS

REGION: WORKPLAN DATA SHEET. (See explanatory notes on separate page) Page ___ of ___

Area Office _____ Prepared by _____ Date _____		
Theme _____		
1. Which (is, are) the intended target audience? Estimated number (s)? Which country?		
2. Which (is, are) the information objective (s) for the above theme?		
3. How (is, are) the theme's message (s) going to be developed? If they have been developed... in what form they exist?... which is the source?		
4. How (is, are) the proposed message (s) going to be delivered to the target audience? Specify intended communication channels.		
5. Indicate estimated cost funding source (Admin. Budget Code..... or BAL or IFP)? expected completion date?

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