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"Social Communication and Marketing Workshop", opening and closing statements by Tarzie Vittachi, Nairobi, 10-17 Feb 1985, UNICEF.

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Notes

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The opening statement encourages the workshop, in setting a framework for action for the CSDR, to pay particular attention to five areas: CSDR is not about poverty but seeks to remedy the results of poverty; UNICEF should see its role as 'agent provocateur'; political will is not only a factor on the part of government, the people's political will is also necessary; semantics - he does not like 'social marketing'; changing from supply approach to a demand approach; ethical values - moving from partial treatment to whole treatment, from aggression to consideration, from anti-illness to pro-health.

The closing statement discusses what has been learned during the workshop, and new communications/publications policy in UNICEF.

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4

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING WORKSHOP
NAIROBI FEBRUARY 1985

OPENING STATEMENT BY TARZIE VIIACHI

There has been somewhat of a revolution over the past few years, which is, as most revolutions not complete: A United Nations agency has generally agreed that communications and information are central to its programmes and not at the periphery.

This meeting should have a purpose. We should try to work out a general framework for action, which will then have to be adapted to very special local country contexts.

There are five areas that need attention, in developing this framework:

1 Limitations of CSDR

CSDR programmes are not about poverty, but seek to remedy the results of poverty. Advocacy can have an impact on poverty itself, but our programmes deal mainly with the fall-out (effects of poverty)

2. Organisational Constraints

In a sense many of us are strangers in the countries where we work, since we do not speak the national language. We are getting better at this (the SOWCR* was issued in 48 languages last year), but given this limitation we should see our role to be that of a catalyst, an "animateur" or even an "agent provocateur". UNICEF is not about UNICEF, but about children. Therefore we must encourage others to participate, and there should be no sense of competition in the sometimes tragic " game " we are in.

*

State of the World's Children Report

3. Political Will

Since the term was coined by Arthur Lewis, we have used it to refer mainly to the will of governments. It is true that nothing gets started in our countries without the government, party etc. But nothing is maintained without popular political will. The example of what Sri Lanka was able to achieve is useful to consider. It is not so much a question of what we can afford to do, but what we cannot afford not to do, that exemplified popular will in Sri Lanka.

4. Semantics

We should avoid too much emphasis on semantics. Though we work with words, and they become symbols in our lives, we should not get bogged down in "words about words". Social Marketing is a term that rubs me the wrong way. I don't like its connotations. I prefer social or programme communications, bringing along the skills that have been learnt in the market place.

5. Demand Approach

We have to recognize a terrible truth. Thirty Five to Forty year of development has by and large failed except in some small countries. North Korea for example which is already doing 110 percent of what UNICEF is advocating elsewhere. There are few examples where the supply approach has worked. It has its limitations and has huge costs (social and human). One example used was Family Planning. There has been a belief that up to now supply will create demand. Rather demand creates demand.

6. Ethical Values

Programme communications must respond to needs at a very basic level, such as explaining to a mother why she should vaccinate her children (including what vaccination is). By doing this more demand will be generated, and supply must be ready to respond. In doing this we must seek values appropriate to our time and we should move from aggression to consideration; from "anti-illness" to "pro-health"; from partial treatment to whole treatment.

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING WORKSHOP
NAIROBI FEBRUARY 1985

CLOSING STATEMENT BY TARZIE VITIACHI

We have all learned something, including myself. Programme Communications must be central and essential to our planning of programmes. There are many "broad gauged" communicators with many skills who could easily be integrated to programme. There is much more recognition of communications by programme than I previously suspected. What we now need to do is integrate communications in the psychology of management (including career development etc...) and to recognize that inter marriage between PSC and Programme may offer the best solution (ie Gary and Richard act).

We must recognise that CSDR is not exclusive but inclusive of our programme efforts. Also we must recognise that it is important not to be sentimental. I advocate the demand approach, but I recognise that there are some situations where people do not always know best. The purpose of programme communications should be to work in the area of "dynamic assymetry" between peoples knowledge (ie awareness of needs) and what we can contribute.

In New York we are improving our communications. Our publications policy is changing, with the SOWCR as our flagship, and the phasing out of UNICEF News and Ideas Forum. The Annual Report will continue as our corporate publication. We are encouraging more field based publications, without any control from New York, and especially more local language editions (with local publishers wherever possible).

There will also be a newswire to the Committees, which I encourage you to contribute to with fresh material (not necessarily finished products). The field will also have access to this service.

We will be encouraging more the training of journalists in development issues, in attempt to make allies in the media (both news and NGO). The programme will probably start after this years Board.