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Page 2
Date 11/7/2007
Time 2:53:34 PM

Login Name Saroja Douglas



CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000375

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000375**

External ID

Title

"Comments on Nairobi Workshop", memo from Mark Rasmuson, AED, Washington, DC, to RRN Tuluhungwa, UNICEF, with comments on UNICEF's workshop on Social Communication and Marketing, held in Nairobi, 10-17 Feb 1985. UNICEF

Date Created / From Date

Date Registered

Date Closed / To Date

2/25/1985

8/10/2007 at 1:21 PM

Primary Contact

Home Location **CF-RAF-USAA-DB01-2007-10316 (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 **In Container 'CF-RAF-USAA-DB01-2007-10316 (Upasana Young)' since 11/6/2007 at**

Date Published

F13: Record Copy? **No**

Record Type **A01 PD-GEN ITEM**

Contained Records

Container **CF/RA/BX/PD/CW/1985/T033: PSC. "Social Communication and Mar**

Fd3: Doc Type - Format

Da1: Date First Published

Priority

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

Notes

3 pp

Discusses reactions of the participants; child survival and ORT programmes can become a trigger for other development objectives, such as income-generating activities.

Print Name of Person Submit Image

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SAROJA DOUGLAS

Saroja Dougl,

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Academy for Educational Development

AED
International Division

PSC SERVICE
Date <u>5 March 85</u>
Att: <u>RJ</u>

February 25, 1985

Mr. R.R.N. Tuluhungwa
Chief, Programme Communication Service
UNICEF
United Nations, New York 10017

Dear Revi,

As you requested and I promised, here are a few of my observations from your very stimulating Nairobi conference.

My impression was that most workshop participants left the conference with a better and more sympathetic understanding of social marketing than many arrived with. It was clear at the start of the meeting that a number of participants viewed social marketing as either a vaguely understood or overtly threatening approach being handed down from New York. Jim Mayrides in his opening remarks, for example, characterized social marketing as "frightening," being perhaps deliberately provocative. The workshop's various presentations and discussions succeeded in focusing people's attention on the concepts and tools which social marketing offers to communication and program planners and away from its superficial ideological associations.

Reed and Gleason's discussion, for example, presented marketing as program advocacy, particularly to senior officials. My presentation depicted communication as consumer advocacy, which draws upon concepts from marketing as well as a number of other fields. Da Cunha demonstrated that social marketing is not necessarily an exorbitantly expensive endeavor and how, in the Brazilian context, it produced a very large bang for a quite small buck. And of course Vittachi's enjoinders to avoid "development theology" and his clarification of the term "demand approach" were very helpful. My understanding of his use of "demand approach," to describe a process of empowerment or "conscientization," is that it shares more with the concept of community participation than it does with marketing.

Nonetheless, as you are well aware, there continues to be some strong resistance among some of the UNICEF field people to the social marketing approach, particularly, it seems, among

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the Europeans and Latin Americans. It is seen as manipulative, crassly commercial, a "top-down" approach, or too expensive in terms of mass media costs.

There is also the quite justified fear that a marketing approach which focuses on demand creation will create grave problems for a government whose health service delivery system has not been previously strengthened to cope with increased demand. This is a concern which has been repeatedly expressed to us in recent months by the staff of the WHO diarrheal disease control program.

I also detected some resistance or, perhaps more accurately, misunderstanding among some of the workshop participants of the CSDR concept. Several people with whom I spoke and worked during the week expressed feeling that the thrust of the CSDR program is too narrow, too health technology or child-survival oriented and too-little child-development oriented. As an outsider, I am not in a position to say whether this is an accurate reflection of CSDR priorities or not. But one certainly gets the impression from the case studies and country examples presented that ORT and immunizations are priorities, as they are for very good reasons in our own work at PRITECH/AID. And, as I have said, some of your people feel that a broader package of programs, which includes community development and income generation activities, for example, is preferable.

It is very important to hear, understand, and address these concerns because I think it is easy to lose sight of some important but less easily quantified objectives in the current push on mortality reduction. In focussing too exclusively on rapidly increasing ORT or immunization coverage rates, however worthy these goals are, one can neglect such important other goals as building national capacities to continue doing quality work once the ORT or EPI campaign is over. The role of the audience may become one of mere compliance rather than participation. Such an approach will share more with the failed supply-side strategies of the past than with a demand approach which aspires to empower people with a sense of being able to improve their children's lives.


What is needed, as Vittachi eloquently stated, is an "and/and" approach, one which both seeks to rapidly improve program indicators like ORT coverage rates and to promote institution building and community development. I recall the seemingly very positive example of Colombia, where the jornados led to a whole sequence of other development activities. I'm also reminded of a project that we (PRITECH) are in the process of developing in Bolivia, where an ORT program is both an end in itself and a

means of stimulating Bolivian mothers' clubs to generate income and become more effective development institutions. The project, to be implemented by CARITAS with PRITECH technical assistance, will distribute ORS packets (locally manufactured) to participating mothers' clubs, who will in turn sell the packets to community members and use the income for other development projects.

Finally, the role of the PSC--excuse me, Programme Communication Officer!--in UNICEF. I believe enough was said and surely you are fully aware of the frustrations and aspirations of this important group of people. Hopefully, the recommendations of the last day of the workshop about marketing the concept of programme communications to UNICEF representatives and programme officers will hasten the process of opening eyes to the importance of communication which, to your credit, is already so far along within UNICEF.

Once again let me thank you for the opportunity of participating with all of you in Nairobi. I certainly learned a great deal, enjoyed meeting many people, and hope to have an opportunity to work with you again in the near future.

Yours truly,


Mark Rasmuson
Senior Program Officer