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Recounts UNICEF's communication activities 1981-1983, and cooperation with the Government of India, especially the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Cooperation with NGOs, which had proved to be most receptive to UNICEF's ideas and themes on social communication. The paper also contains special events during the period, and prospects for 1985-1989.

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Third Draft

8 May 1984

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A Position Paper on

ADVOCACY, DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION/
PROGRAMME SUPPORT COMMUNICATION

I. Introduction

UNICEF has cooperated with the Government of India in extension activities. The latest MPO period of 1981-83 had several areas of cooperation between UNICEF and GOI, of which, advocacy, development information and PSC played an important role. It was also shown that these three components of the communication efforts are mutually supportive dimensions of one whole, bearing out the wisdom of a merger of the PI/PSC units effected in 1977.

The integrated approach that has grown out of this merger has helped to make convergence a sine qua non of UNICEF cooperation in communication with both government and other counterparts. The GOI has its own network of information outlets which make use of non-formal and folk channels of communication, beside the electronic media and the print media. It had identified communication as a priority of the Sixth Five Year Plan which is concluding. UNICEF, in the MPO period 1981-83, has worked as a catalyst other than a media producer. The experience gained in these three years showed that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting can be a highly motivated and powerful counterpart. And this ought to be kept clearly in mind when formulating a country programme that rests so heavily on advocacy and the communication arts.

II. Programme Activities : 1981-83

Advocacy and communication efforts that were formerly implied were now stated as programme objectives for the MPO, 1981-83. During this period, new kinds of working relationships influenced the manner in which information activities were initiated and carried out. The MPO objective had the dual purpose of promoting priority themes and strengthening the communication skills of government, NGO and media partners. We set out to do this by working 'through' the sectors rather than contenting ourselves with distributing our own 'products'. UNICEF's own credibility as initiator was improved, and we were looked at as partners in programme development rather than just a supplier of hardware. We have now been accepted as an ideas bank and as joint cooperator in software programme development.

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(a) Information Activities

The Information activities of the section continued to mushroom along with the programme activities of UNICEF. Beside the usual publication of special articles and new supplements giving information about UNICEF themes, the Information unit also organised several large travelling photo exhibitions and support to several major conferences. This led to the acceptance of UNICEF as an initiator of social communication. Deliberate investment in sponsoring supplements in the Press paid dividends in 1983, with some major publications deciding to continue promoting child-related concerns at their own cost. Publication of 'Indian-language' versions of information materials extended their outreach, and significantly enhanced the impact of the State of the World's Children report of 1982-83 and 1984. The innovative approach of placing advertisements in several leading national journals, both in English and regional languages, to promote better infant feeding practices, had a tremendous response. The response was so large that an NGO had to be contracted to take care of replying to queries regarding improved infant feeding practices, and thus was created the Infant Nutrition Information Service (INIS). A similar thing is likely to happen with our having placed advertisements on awareness of leprosy in leading national newspapers in early 1984.

Other Information activities included support to the front office during, and in preparation of, the release of 'The State of the World's Children' reports, 1982-83 and 1984. This resulted in the Prime Minister and the President of India issuing statements in support of children's needs and priorities. The section also assisted in the successful visits of several benefactors of UNICEF, such as the U.S. Committee for UNICEF, CIDA and SIDA members, and several filming missions from HQ.

(b) Advocacy and PSC Activities(i) Cooperation with GOI agencies

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was the counterpart agency of the Information/BSC section, though the Ministry of Social Welfare was the focal agency with which UNICEF was cooperating in the field of child development and related issues. Working relationship was slow in taking off, but with the joint orientation programme of radio workshops, initiated by PSC in 1982,

cooperation between the Ministry of I & B and UNICEF began to become fruitful. The radio workshops brought together low-level field functionaries, and the decision makers and planners along with radio producers on a common platform, to discuss and evolve radio programmes for women and children. Radio programmes are now being produced relevant to the field, and not from within the four walls of a studio only. So far, radio workshops have been organised in the states of Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Following these workshops, one radio station of Haryana and U.P. and five of Tamil Nadu have already started broadcasting MCH programmes. In cooperation with state governments and NGOs, arrangements have been made for organised listening and evaluation of these programmes to assess absorption of basic messages. The community response from Haryana is very encouraging. The programmes focused on the first year of the child's life.

The radio workshops also brought together other agencies of the Ministry of I & B, such as the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP), Directorate of Field Publicity, Song and Drama Division, Press Information Bureau (PIB), etc. who are keen to have similar orientation so that they too will benefit from our experience.

Recently, the Minister of Information & Broadcasting, Mr H.K.L. Bhagat, called a meeting with organisations engaged in welfare activities for women and children, and representatives of the Ministry of Social Welfare, to discuss and exchange ideas on improvement of radio and TV programmes relating to women and children. UNICEF also participated in the deliberations. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has requested UNICEF's liaison support in dealing with the Ministry of I & B and with other media channels. Selected co-production, already under way, is an additional prospect. The Ministry of Social Welfare has also sought UNICEF's guidance in improving its communication cell.

Our cooperation with the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) got off very slowly with the communication section of the Institute floundering as to its objective. Except for the joint production with UNICEF of a 13-part filmstrip series on training for ICDS anganwadi workers, the communication section of NIPCCD was underutilized. But on UNICEF's suggestion to integrate the communication section with the training technology section, NIPCCD has now started to look at communication as a tool for training CDPOs.

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(ii) Cooperation with NGOs

NGOs have proved to be most receptive of UNICEF's ideas and themes on social communication. During the MPO period of 1981-83, the growth of collaboration between UNICEF and the NGOs progressed very rapidly.

It would be too exhaustive a list to put down all the activities that NGOs and UNICEF have cooperated upon during this period. Noteworthy to mention are a few, such as, Education to Reality, an NGO involved with education of young children, who, together with UNICEF organised workshops for school teachers and children on topics such as Gandhi's values as relevant today. UNICEF has also cooperated with the Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation to bring about awareness of the dreaded disease 'leprosy' to the common man -- especially in endemic areas -- and spread the message that 'leprosy is curable, if treated early enough'. We helped launch a national campaign to create awareness about the disease.

Following the release of the SWCR-1984, several NGOs got together with UNICEF to find out a way in which they can promote SWCR messages. The Information/PSC section acted as a catalyst for this meeting.

The most noteworthy cooperation with an NGO is with the INIS, a subsidy of NANI and VHAI. This followed from our placing advertisements in several leading national papers and journals on improved infant feeding practices. The volume of the response was so great that the section could not handle it alone and so had to contract it out to the NGO who has taken it upon itself to carry it on like a crusade. The campaign for promoting improved infant feeding practices, with UNICEF's lobbying and the active involvement of several NGOs, have resulted in the acceptance and adoption of the Code for the marketing of infant foods by the GOI.

UNICEF's cooperation with NGOs including advertising agencies have also resulted in a proposal from a leading advertising agency, REACT Advertising Services, and a leading manufacturing firm, Sylvania Laxman, to co-sponsor with UNICEF a series of programmes on TV covering aspects of health such as diarrhoea control and management, goitre, anaemia, prevention of blindness, breast-feeding, leprosy, etc.

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Experimental cooperation drawing together Members of Parliament and voluntary organisations to bridge the public perception gap about child survival and lowered birth rates has started moving after a year of effort with both the groups. A joint promotion plan will be implemented with the MPs this year. This formula can then move to a national scale when Zone Offices establish similar contacts with state legislators.

(iii) Cooperation with Programme Sections

During the MPO period under review, a notable change occurred internally when several programme sections tried their hands at PSC and information work, with minimal technical assistance from this section. Some communication projects jointly undertaken by programme sections, with INF/PSC involvement, were :

- (a) Production of two films on community participation for the ADS section.
- (b) Production of a series of five modules on childhood disability for the E&CD section.
- (c) Production of audio-visuals on diarrhoea management "A Simple Solution, anaemia and EPI.
- (d) Joint venture with a zone office (MNIO) on communication support for the Dewas EPI project.
- (e) Communication support for the Delhi immunization project.
- (f) Support to the E&CD section for designing and production of books on childhood disability.
- (g) Support to the WES section in pre-testing and designing various communication materials, such as posters, pamphlets, and slide sets.

This experience shows that with the increased PSC involvement of other programme staff, the ADI/PSC team working on a country programme should progressively function as a technical resource group, investing more energy in planning, orientation, ground-breaking and development activities, technical advisory services, and generation of new channels, than in routine in-house production support.

(iv) Special Events

An area of activity that the INF/PSC section has been experimenting with successfully is the organisation of special events.

HRH Prince Talal, UNICEF's special envoy, paid several visits to India during the period 1981-83. This entailed press coverage and programme schedules which gave us another opportunity to go public on UNICEF objectives and policies through the mass media.

In 1982, when Columbia Pictures agreed to let UNICEF handle the world premiere of the film "Gandhi". the section had the opportunity to test national prospects for fund-raising and large-scale promotion. This venture not only yielded more than a million rupees from Indian donors, but also provided the opportunity for UNICEF to widen its media and NGO contacts. The assignment helped develop promotional and organisational skills, thereby opening up new communication possibilities. As a spin-off from this, UNICEF came into contact with eminent personalities, such as the famous musician, Pt. Ravi Shankar.

During the recent music festival "Uday Utsav, organised by Pt. Ravi Shankar in honour of his brother, Pt. Ravi Shankar was approached by UNICEF and he agreed to dedicate the last day of his performance for the children of the world. Pt. Ravi Shankar has also agreed to be a spokesman for UNICEF to highlight children's needs and priorities, wherever he performs.

With this baptism by fire for organising special events, UNICEF is poised to take on special events that will support its basic services strategy for children. The organising of special events will also provide a base for fund-raising activities in support of UNICEF's concern on child survival and development issues.

III. Perspective for 1985-89

A summary review of the communication scene in India, and the present status of UNICEF cooperation with both state and private communication activities, indicates that the period 1985-89 can well be one of considerable expansion and diversification. The 1981-83 experience has established that cooperative activity in advocacy, development information and programme support communication has graduated from an experimental level to become an essential and important programming area in its own right.

Major partnerships and spheres of cooperation that have dominated the MPO period just completed, are likely to continue and grow in the coming 5-year country programme. Several will expand during 1984, an interregnum

year that provides a useful testing time so that questions of scale and volume can be examined and resolved along with substantive issues.

One predictable result of trying to 'go to scale' in communication is already evident : the operation will falter without larger allocations of money and manpower. By the same token, if a sensible and realistic investment is made, the positive climate that now exists is proof enough that a firm foundation has been laid, and that the growth potential is very good.

The present proposal rests on two basic assumptions:

- a) that the UNICEF investment, just mentioned, will be bolder than the one made in 1981-83;
- b) that trends in GOI planning presently discernible in the run-up to the Seventh Five Year Plan, will not be radically altered in the final Plan.

The ADI/PSC emphasis on national child survival and development priorities -- and its use of the umbrella theme "minus 9 months to plus 12 months " -- highlights the key period for primary, preventive and protective action; the overall communication approach stresses action by the community, at the community level. This emphasis and approach cover the health and social development objectives so far enunciated for the Seventh Plan. The urgency of converging basic services for maximum beneficial impact on the child and its effective environment, must continue to be advocated both generally and specifically, and the importance of cost-effective local action (rather than possibly superficial "national" ventures) must continue to be promoted.

With its own integration of the different dimensions of communication in one composite whole, UNICEF can contribute to such a communication effort in a variety of ways, drawing upon a wide range of resources that already exist in India—from the earthy folk theatre of the villages to the glossy salesmanship of the commercial and show-business world, and from the small scale personal contact programmes of NGOs to the multi-faceted activities of the government mass media and the Press. UNICEF's own credibility as an initiator of such experimentation has improved.

Within the basic services content, and in full awareness of national potential to meet national aspirations and priorities, the motivational promise of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade and of International Youth Year (and a possible youth decade), as also of the culmination of the Decade for Women, should be exploited; they are relevant to UNICEF's concern for the child.

Financial needs for the new country programme have to be realistically planned and met, if the communication component is to be more than a mere appendage to the overall programme initiative.

It is already apparent that even the 'seeding' activity characteristic of UNICEF's communication programme now calls for an annual investment level at least double that of the 1981-83 period. Provided that UNICEF can maintain flexibility in spending its funds, the minimum allocation for ADI/PSC should be about \$400,000 a year, the bulk of it software and training support. (The 1984 allocation is \$349,000; the 1983 allocation was \$175,000). This works out to \$2 million for the total 1985-89 period, which is still only one per cent of the proposed country commitment. An optimum level could well be around \$600,000 per year during this period, provided staff strength can also diversify and expand to meet the projected work requirements. The funding level should begin to fall to within \$500,000 by 1988-89, when activities will move into the consolidation phase.

Project staff costs could rise from \$50,000 in 1985 to \$80,000 per year by 1987, but with progressive deployment of posts to zone locations, advocacy development information and PSC activity would really take root in the programme. (Please see annexes, especially attachments on staffing and budget, for details.)