A SYNTHESIS OF POPULATION COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCE

PAPER 10

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MASS MEDIA IN POPULATION COMMUNICATION PROGRAMS

Jack Glattbach

East-West Center
East-West Communication Institute
THE EAST-WEST CENTER—officially known as the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange Between East and West—is a national educational institution established in Hawaii by the U.S. Congress in 1960 to promote better relations and understanding between the United States and the nations of Asia and the Pacific through cooperative study, training, and research. The Center is administered by a public, nonprofit corporation whose international Board of Governors consists of distinguished scholars, business leaders, and public servants.

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THE EAST-WEST COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE concentrates on the role of communication in economic and social development and in the sharing of knowledge across cultural barriers. The Institute awards scholarships for graduate study in communication and related disciplines, primarily at the University of Hawaii; conducts a variety of professional development projects for communication workers in specialized fields of economic and social development; invites Fellows and visiting scholars to the Center for study and research in communication and to help design projects; offers Jefferson Fellowships for Asian, Pacific, and U.S. journalists for a semester at the Center and the University of Hawaii; conducts and assists in designing and carrying out research; arranges conferences and seminars relating to significant topics in communication; assembles relevant communication materials with emphasis on Asian and Pacific material and makes these available for students, scholars, and practitioners at the Center and elsewhere; and publishes papers, reports, newsletters, and other materials emanating from the above activities.
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Jack Glattbach

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East-West Center
East-West Communication Institute
1777 East-West Road
Honolulu, Hawaii 96848
ABSTRACT

The paper is an analysis of the public information component of population and family planning programs. It reviews the variety of ways that population messages have been distributed by mass media such as radio, newspapers and magazines, films, television, posters and folk media. Topics covered include the nature of population/family planning as it affects communication strategy and content, the development over the last two decades of public information activities in population/family planning, the failure on the part of population communicators to understand the nature of mass media and to take advantage of opportunities to increase media coverage of population issues, the population "lobby" and its access to media, the use of commercial resources for marketing and advertising family planning services, problems and needs in the area of population communication-related research, and the planning and management of communication strategies and programs. The paper concludes by identifying several areas where public information programs could be improved.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jack Glattbach is a journalist, free-lance writer and consultant. He was with the Press Foundation of Asia from 1970 to 1975. From 1970 to 1973 he was Editorial Director of the South East Asia Press Centre in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and then from 1974 to 1975 in Manila as Editor-in-Chief of Media magazine and of the Asian Press and Media Directory. He also served as correspondent for the Sunday Times of London and for the British Broadcasting Corporation. As a consultant on population and development communications, he has worked with the United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP), the Ford Foundation, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and the International Institute of Communications (formerly the International Broadcast Institute). He is shortly to be based in New York as a writer for UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF.
SERIES PREFACE

In 1970, the East-West Communication Institute undertook to develop and carry out a special program, involving numerous activities in the area of population and family planning communication under a major institution building grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Its activities for the past six years have included research; the development of innovative professional development activities for family planning communication specialists; international conferences and workshops; a variety of information sharing activities and services; and a large publications program that has produced: a population/family planning communication newsletter, research case studies, conference reports, an inventory of family planning communication activities and needs in 20 countries, a series of reports on donor and technical assistance agencies in the field, reference tools on sources of population information and materials, and 12 modules for family planning communication training.

As a final activity in its six-year program in population communication, the Institute has undertaken to publish a series of 11 papers which summarize developments in population communication over the last several years. The Synthesis Papers, as they have come to be called, cover the various public-oriented components of population/family planning communication programs—formal, in-school population education; education for adults and out-of-school youth; public information activities; use of mass media; and field extension programs—as well as the organizational and administrative concerns of national family planning programs including training for family planning communication personnel; the operation and strategies of family planning programs; the conduct and utilization of program-related research; professional and technical information services in support of population activities; and the integration of family planning with other development sectors. In addition,
two of the papers survey the international and regional activities that have had a significant impact on the overall development of national family planning programs and activities: technical and economic assistance, and meetings and conferences.

The papers are written by experts in the field—people who have had close personal involvement with the development and evolution of national and international programs over the years. In these papers, the authors have attempted to address several major questions: How have population communication programs developed? What has been accomplished? What has been learned? What do past experiences suggest for future efforts?

The Synthesis of Population Communication Experience Project was planned and initiated by Dr. Robert P. Worrall, who directed the East-West Communication Institute’s activities in population communication from the beginning of the program in 1970 until he left in July 1976 to become Vice President of the Population Reference Bureau. Under his leadership, the Institute established contact with people in 133 countries and territories and involved in its programs more than 500 middle- and upper-level specialists in information, education, and communication.

Mr. Lyle Saunders, former Ford Foundation Program Officer in Population was a Visiting Researcher at the Institute from November 1975 to November 1976. During that year he was closely involved in the planning and implementation of the project. He has continued to serve as special advisor and consultant to the project, and has been one of the two substantive editors of the Synthesis Papers.

Dr. James R. Echols, former President of the Population Reference Bureau and now Population Communication Consultant to several organizations, has also served as Project consultant and as the other substantive editor for the papers.

Barbara Yount, Writer/Editor of the Institute’s IEC Newsletter, which under her editorship grew from a 4-page to a 28-page quarterly newsletter reaching 8,000 people, has been general editor of the series.

Millicent Sanchez assisted the general editor with the copy-editing and the seemingly never-ending bibliographic work such a project requires.
Kay Garrett, EWCI Publications Officer, has been responsible for the design, production, and distribution of the series.

Alison Miura, Karen Katayama, and Roberta Morgan typeset the papers; Jill McEdward and Louise Good cheerfully helped with the volume of proofreading.

Shana Hurst has served as Secretary to the Project since 1975 and has taken care of a million necessary details.

To all of these people, including the writers themselves, I owe an immense debt of gratitude for their time, effort, and dedication to the Synthesis Project.

Elizabeth Buck
Assistant Director for
AID Activities
CHAPTER 1
Where Are We?

Communication is as much part of medicine as penicillin. We should be putting twice as much money and talent into research about communications as we are now.

--Leona Baumgartner (1966)  1

This quote really says it all for public information in support of population and family planning. The communication aspect of population problems of which public information is a major part is as important as the medical aspect but we do not fully understand how and why.

In the ten years since the quote was uttered we have greatly increased the investment in communications research without really securing a proportionate increase in understanding.

This paper does not need to describe "the population problem" apart from stressing the urgency of finding acceptable answers and recognizing the fact that dealing with rapid population growth is an extremely new problem.

Twenty years ago "population" rarely made media headlines. Contraceptives were sold under-the-counter or distributed by discreet, white-walled, essentially middle-class clinics. The whole subject was either so ridden with taboos that it could not be mentioned in polite company or treated so discreetly that obtaining a simple piece of rubber required a medical prescription.
Things have changed since then. Population has become a media story. Contraceptives are easier to obtain. Laws about the subject have been changed. Governments have said that population programs are "a good thing." However, there are still many countries where this has not happened, and our knowledge of how these changes were brought about is far from perfect. Such knowledge is particularly imperfect in the field of public information.

It is much easier to detail what we know than what we do not.

- We know that the only countries to lower birthrates in recent years without a significant communications program have placed heavier emphasis on abortion than on contraception.

- We know that more and more countries are launching and/or expanding communications programs in support of family planning.

- We know that the techniques of mass communication have helped promote population goals. However, we also know that the best clincher of a contraceptive "acceptor" is a personal chat rather than a newspaper story or a radio program.

And we are just beginning really to know that saying the same thing to two different people can generate different or even opposite results. Tell a Western woman, concerned with being overweight, that using contraceptive pills will add to her problems and she might decide against using them. Yet tell the same story to a Taiwanese woman, concerned about increasing her weight, and she might happily accept.

But once we start to ask how and why, in the hope of being able to achieve similar results elsewhere, we quickly enter uncharted territory. Later in the paper we will examine in greater detail what we do know and the problems of research in the field, but first we must identify two major sets of problems which plague efforts to give better and greater use of public information in support of family planning. The first concerns the nature of population and family planning; the second, the nature of communication.
THE NATURE OF POPULATION/FAMILY PLANNING

This paper does not need to spell out that human reproductive behavior is an exceedingly complex business—biologically, medically, socially, and psychologically. The essential point is that we cannot communicate about the subject in the same way that we can about a football game or the price of rice. There are so many variables. Simplification—that essential technique of mass communication—becomes an extremely complicated process if the messages are to be true and honest, as they ultimately must be if we value our credibility.

Additionally, we are faced with the historical fact that family planning—our euphemism for stopping the production of babies—has developed as an adjunct of medicine. Medical practitioners, like all professions, tend to guard their specialized knowledge with many barriers, including secrecy. The communicator’s urge to shout is met by the doctor’s urge to whisper. Historically, family planning doctors have had a powerful ally—middle class women in many developed countries—who, by their encouragement of the proliferation of family planning clinics, surrounded contraceptives with still more layers of taboos instead of making them more accessible from the corner store. The last two decades have seen a general rapid breakdown of this situation, but the medico-middle class ambience is still highly evident, even if diminishing.

As if this were not sufficient impediment, the politicians, economists, and development planners have also expressed their doubts that family planning is the best or the only way to solve the problems of rapid population growth. Family planning does not automatically secure the same endorsement as, say, piped water supply or malaria eradication or other specific goals of "development."

Thus the information sources about population and family planning do not immediately help the communicator. There is proportionately a much greater amount of homework/research facing the population communicator than in almost any other major field of media coverage.
THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATIONS

The problems caused by the nature of population/family planning would be more easily coped with if communication rested on a bedrock of secure knowledge, but it seems that the more we learn about communications the more we have to unlearn.

Much is heard about "change agents" but communication is only slowly becoming recognized as the ultimate change agent. And it is cold comfort to know that even if you do your communications job well, badly, or not at all, the process will proceed without you in any case. The more developed societies may have become more inured to these processes. But in the developing world, living with change is itself a new process and, especially, living with changes in communication where our knowledge of how the process works is far from total.

While our knowledge of how communication works proceeds slowly, there is an almost exponential growth in our technical capacity to handle information. We can now make bigger blunders than ever before, and we tend to think pessimistically about blunders--rather than optimistically about greater successes.

But the pressures on communicators are increasing, often faster than we can cope. The majority of development projects still do not have a realistic communications component. People like Erskine Childers at the United Nations Development Support Communication Service, have fought long and hard to make planners include communications in all development projects. The battle is far from won and population is no exception.

Communications still attracts more lip service than resources. Information service is usually among the first to be cut when budgets tighten. (It may be noteworthy to public-sector personnel that in large, private-sector enterprises, information budgets are often increased when times get hard.) As a final kick in the teeth the communicator also has to temper his cries for help with the knowledge that most of the research work in communications will not help--because it is too specialized, incomplete, irrelevant, or not "translated" into practical advice.

Such a situation is not encouraging. But maybe that is just
as well since, generally, the practicing world of communications is no place for the fainthearted or for those who prefer security to creativity.

Perhaps this situation points to another problem with present population communications: an over-representation of theoreticians, be they social scientists or communication scholars. The nature and fashions of international development assistance in the field of population have undoubtedly favored the recruitment of academics rather than practitioners (a situation which even the best academics happily recognize). Thus there is now a considerable volume of literature in the field, very little of which is directly relevant to the practice of population communications and which is more to the requirements of doctoral theses and the development of a theory of population communications.

Yet there are causes for optimism in the achievements of population communications. Individual examples are cited in succeeding chapters and the general growth of communications programs around the world indicates some degree of satisfaction with previous performance.

The growth of public information activity in population and family planning is difficult to describe globally: the chronicler of population communications has yet to emerge. But there can be no doubt that public information activities have greatly increased in the last two decades.

William O. Sweeney has briefly described the growth of planned population communications:

By 1968, more and more people were expressing a need to 'get family planning in the air'. Clinic based education was not enough. More people had to be informed; mass media should be used.

The idea of using mass media was not new. There were already some public information efforts in family planning programs. India had adopted the Red Triangle as a sign of family planning; thousands of signs, billboards, wall paintings, and other outdoor media displayed the triangle and declared that
two or three children are enough. Jamaica, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, and a few other countries had public information activities. But the efforts were limited in scale.

By 1969, there were clinic education and some public information activities in family planning programs; all had clinic education and a few, public information. The two types of activities were seen by most family planning workers as distinct and separate. As a generalization, health educators considered public information as marginally effective; the public information people saw clinic education as very limited in terms of reaching large numbers of women and couples.

In 1969, Ghana declared a national population policy. . . . This was the first national program . . . to create an organization with equal emphasis on Services and Information/Education (Sweeney, 1973 (b), p. 98).

The process quickly spread and by the early 1970's several countries had adopted major multi-media campaigns to promote their population programs. Ghana and Jamaica and others used commercial advertising to sell contraceptives: radio, television, newspapers, magazines, films, posters, billboards, festivals, matchboxes, village gongs . . . . Suddenly population got a Madison Avenue treatment in several countries. Korea and Taiwan were especially inventive. The Philippines embarked on a major information and education campaign.

For a time during these years, population was the international catalyst. Mention it and the aid came: money could be raised, programs designed and packaged. It was all go. Population and demography became the latest fashion of the development set.

This atmosphere still prevails in many areas. But the mushrooming activity quickly taught some harsh lessons: it was little use spending a small fortune on advertising contraceptives if they were not available in the local stores; a slogan that works well in Indonesia does not automatically work as well in neighboring Philippines; large budgets do not guarantee success, however defined.
There has also been a great increase in the volume of international public information activity—stemming mainly from the big international aid agencies. There are IPPF News, IPPF Medical Bulletin, and People magazine from the International Planned Parenthood Federation, reports and studies from the Population Council, the East-West Communication Institute's IEC Newsletter, the Population Report of George Washington University and, latterly, the output of the United Nations' new agency for population, the Fund for Population Activities. Other branches of the United Nations have taken the population story into many related fields—medicine, labor, agriculture, education.

The unplanned public information activities are much more difficult to describe but there can be no doubt that there has been an enormous increase in mass media coverage of "the population story." Few major publications now see a week go by without some reference to an aspect of population. Some large publications have taken significant steps to increase their population coverage: Newsweek hired Tarzie Vittachi of the UNFPA as a regular columnist; the Sunday Times of London sponsored a major population conference for other media personnel. Donor agencies, first in Asia, then in Latin America, and possibly now in the Arab world, have cooperated in developing feature agencies devoted primarily to population coverage (for example, the Press Foundation of Asia and ALACODE [Asociación Latino Americana de Comunicadores Demográficos] in Colombia).

Frances Dennis, chief information officer of the IPPF, confirms the trend—and the difficulty of describing it statistically. She gives four major reasons for the growth of all this public information coverage:

1. The decline of the control of family planning by medical personnel;
2. The changing attitudes of governments to population;
3. An increase in funds for information activity;
4. An increase in the willingness of journalists to cover population. 2

She also identifies the heavy over-representation of academics and the resulting "seminar approach" in the field as a continuing barrier.
We should also note that any research attempt to document this trend of an increase in public information activity will be difficult. A survey of the mention of "population" in the media, over the last 20 years, for example, will not necessarily be a true reflection. Stories about overcrowding, urbanization, pressure on land, crime, and education can all be "population stories." We are back to that basic problem with population: it is an all-embracing, universal topic, quite unlike, for example, fertilizers. Thus there may have been much population coverage "hidden" in stories about other subjects.

But we must not delude ourselves that all this media coverage has been favorable. In some countries, for example, Brazil, the media took, and held for many years, a definite anti-family planning position.

There is also the frequently made criticism that much media coverage, especially that of newspapers, has concentrated on only two areas of the population story: the side effects of certain contraceptives, notably the pill, and the "population bomb" approach. It is easy to understand how the media and the medical profession can become antipathetic to each other. This paper is not intending to erect a defense of the media for these stories: undoubtedly there have been misleading, misinformed stories. But I am interested, having just read a fair volume of information about population communications, to see that the evils and faults of newspapers are much better documented than their achievements or merits. As a media practitioner, this worries me little since criticism is an essential fact of media life. But I think this situation encourages the following two general criticisms of population communications and population program administrators.

The first criticism is that population personnel often fail to understand the real purpose of the mass media, especially newspapers. It is not the newspapers' only job to supply the coverage the population people want. Their job is the creation of interest: no newspaper worth its salt is going to ignore somebody saying that the pill can be dangerous, even if under very remote circumstances. And, space being limited, this type of story will always be preferred to those about the opening of new clinics. It is simply a fact of life that we are all more interested, very generally, in "conflict" rather than "non-conflict." The media really only follows our human propensities.
The second criticism is related but more tactical. Because of a lack of understanding, the population "lobby" has missed countless opportunities for increasing media coverage of population. As the best propagandists have long known, there is nothing better than a few critical stories to provide a launching pad for your own messages. In too many population programs this has not been appreciated; the views of population communicators about the media are often simplistic and their performance passive.

But, returning to a more optimistic vein, public information activity is, generally, increasing and improving—both through the efforts of the population lobby and mass media personnel.

In fairness to population communications, too, we must note two important factors: 1) the communications component of population programs is still in its infancy and almost always overshadowed, in resources and status, by the services component, and 2) as a result, most population communications activities fall under the heading of "crash" programs rather than planned ones, certainly until very recently.

Indeed, Wilbur Schramm has pointed out that we really cannot tell what mass communication can do for population because we have never really tried it in a mass and planned way. From the morass of literature in the field, Schramm has also synthesized a most useful ten-point list of "what we do know about family planning information" which is well worth summarizing:

1. Every highly effective campaign combines three essential elements: services, personal contact, and a broad supporting program of information and education.

2. Where available, the most effective tool of an information and education campaign is home visits by a competent and motivated family planning worker.

3. Field workers, effective as they are, need support from other channels of information and persuasion.

4. Whatever channels are used we can count on further diffusion by word of mouth.

5. The chief appeals used effectively thus far in family plan-
ning campaigns have been health, happy families, and education (chiefly for women) and education and economic betterment (chiefly for men).

6. Up to this point, family planning campaigns in the developing countries have been overwhelmingly directed to women, chiefly to those over 30 who already have several children. This focus is now being broadened.

7. The most successful ways of countering unfavorable rumors and reducing the dropout rate have proved to be (a) full disclosure of facts from the beginning, (b) continuing information to doctors and other professional personnel, and (c) followup.

8. Free offers and special campaign periods are helpful when not overused.

9. Incentives work, under acceptable circumstances.

10. In most respects what has been learned about the design of other change campaigns applies also to family planning campaigns (Schramm, 1971 (a), pp. 14-19).

Two points must be made here. First, Schramm is talking about "family planning" rather than the larger field of "population." As we shall see in the next chapter, public information can be especially important in the steps leading to a broad-based population program. Second, we should note especially the remarks about fieldworkers and mass communication. Until very recently, there has been a tendency in population programs to have interpersonal communication (for example, fieldworkers) or mass communication rather than the two together as Schramm suggests. The bias in the literature seems to be toward fieldworkers (possibly because they can be more easily controlled) than toward the mass media (which are much more difficult to control). This is largely irrelevant; the most important point is that they should be seen as complementary rather than as competing factors in communications. Often one feeds the other.

Similarly, it is only very recently that we have started to understand and work with what I can only call "spectrums" of interrelated factors rather than complexes of inputs usually treated as
independent variables.

Thus "population" or "family planning" is not a single issue but a spectrum of factors, each of which can influence the other.

Communications is a spectrum of techniques and processes.

Audiences are shifting spectrums of people.

This may just be a complicated way of saying that there are no simple answers. But there is little doubt that much of the population communication experience to date has been plagued by the work of campaigners for particular tactics. The strategy for the future appears to depend more on developing our understanding of the spectrums of techniques available to us and on being more modest in our expectations of single solutions.
CHAPTER 2
What Is Public Information?
What Are We Trying To Do?

Quite simply, public information is those information activities directed to large, public audiences, rather than to individuals and small groups.

Sweeney says public information activities include mass media usage, advertising and promotion, public relations, and commercial marketing of non-medical contraceptives. 3

The next chapter will deal with those media which can be and have been used for population information. More important questions at this stage are: Why do population programs need public information? What can be done?

It is almost impossible now to find a population program that does not have a public information component. But as recently as 1972, Sweeney was still asking himself if it was necessary to justify the use of mass media in population activities. 4 He cited Richard Manoff's view that the effectiveness of mass media in population was still not proven, while person-to-person communication (in clinics and with fieldworkers, etc.) was clearly effective. Manoff said:

We resent the mass media for their over-emphasis on aimless entertainment, the callous and tasteless importation of foreign program material, their generally low cultural standards. ... We relieve this resentment with bitter attacks on the mass media. We charge them with brainwashing, falsehoods, deception, over-commercialization, materialism, and mis-education. We end up rejecting the mass media for lacking the nobility we need for our lofty purposes. We retreat with our respectability to the tech-
niques of yesterday and condemn ourselves to struggle at a pace that often produces more despair than development (Manoff, 1972, p. 157).

Manoff added that the media were means to ends, nothing more since it was up to "us" to decide the ends and to compel the means to serve them.

Sweeney, meanwhile, pointed out that many population programs were involving the mass media and that 16 countries were buying media time and space. It is a safe assumption that this trend toward increased mass media use has increased since 1972.

But why is public information necessary?

Lyle Saunders has no doubts on this:

Family planning is critically dependent on communication. Contraception and abortion are techniques—and techniques have to be learned before they can be used. Family size is a value, and values are weakened or strengthened by knowledge about the ideas and opinions of others, especially those of peers. For many couples contraception requires a change in behavior, and such changes tend to grow out of new information, new attitudes, new opportunities, and new awareness of what others are thinking and doing. Family planning is, typically, promoted through organizations, which to exist must develop effective channels of both external and internal communications. Organized family planning programs operate by providing information and contraceptive services. Their goal is to induce changes of perspective and behavior in a fundamental area of human life—reproduction. To succeed they must change values and behaviors deeply rooted in biological nature and strongly supported by social sanctions; they must provide the knowledge on which new practices can be based; and they must stimulate the creation of new social norms to institutionalize the innovative behavior they introduce and promote. To achieve their purposes, family planning programs must communicate—both widely and well (Saunders, 1971, p. 82).

Saunders prefaced these remarks with a concise statement on the general relationship between communication and development
which is well worth repeating:

Effective and expanding communication lies at the heart of any development progress. An essential force for any of the social and economic changes that are the goals of national development is an accelerating interchange of information and ideas that makes possible new perceptions, new relationships, new aspirations and new ways of thinking and behaving. It is no accident that development changes come first and move fastest in those areas where communications facilities and a receptivity to communications media are most advanced. Nor is it coincidence that retarded development and restricted communications flow are found together. Development change and expanding communication are linked together in a symbiotic relationship in which each feeds upon, stimulates, and nourishes the other (Saunders, 1971, p. 81).

This lesson is sinking in slowly but is still worth repeating as often as possible to all those development planners who see information as just another branch on the tree of development, instead of as the sap which helps the tree survive and prosper.

So where does information fit into population programs?

These programs are essentially two-legged animals: the first leg being clinical services, meaning medical advice and attention and providing contraceptives; the second leg is communication.

Sweeney has provided a useful view of the range of this communication leg. He describes six major components of a population communication program:

1. **Information**: meaning public information as described above. Person-to-person communication he considers under the next heading of education.

2. **Education**: which is divided into three broad areas: a) clinic education, b) community extension or education, and c) in-school education. (These subjects are dealt with in other papers in this series.)

3. **Information and Education as components of a communications program**: information and education have both obvious
overlaps and differences. The importance of considering them together in this manner is because population programs are aiming to change behavior, and it is therefore important to ensure that the various audiences for population information are not receiving conflicting and confusing messages.

4. **Planning, including research and evaluation**: this is undoubtedly one of the most troublesome areas of population communication: expertise is still largely undeveloped but it is important. Communicators do need to know their audiences, how to reach them, and to know how the messages are being received. It is also important that the communication function has a properly planned place in the overall organization. (This component is examined further in Chapter 5.)

5. **Materials development, including production, media, and messages**: the range of tasks facing the population communicator is considerable and this component has probably attracted more than its fair share of failures in programs to the present (see Chapter 6).

6. **Training**: to date the "service" sector of the population industry (clinic personnel, etc.) has attracted most of the training budgets while the smaller communication sector training budgets have concentrated on fieldworkers rather than public information.

It is again worth repeating that the total stock of knowledge in this area is effectively still little more than 15 years old. Refinements and insights are being made daily. But this framework provides useful signposts.

It is also useful to make a checklist of the major tasks facing the communications program. Saunders has compiled a near-definitive list of objectives for family planning communications and also a list of specific functions. I can do no better than summarize them:

In the early days, say ten years ago, the main objectives of family planning communication were to inform and to motivate. Saunders argues that these are undoubtedly important objectives, but
of comparable importance are the needs to educate, to legitimate, and to reinforce or reassure.

**Information objective:** the aim is to change knowledge in the expectation or hope of changing behavior. Messages will vary from the simple (for example, that family planning is possible, acceptable, and beneficial) to the complex (for example, advising the medical profession about use of oral contraceptives or the IUD). Target audiences will be individuals and groups within the family planning organization and outside it.

**Education:** as noted, the distinction with information is not sharp and there is considerable overlap in achieving these two objectives. Saunders suggests the distinction that communications for education is not only to change knowledge (the information objective) but also to change people—to teach skills, to build habits, to teach new habits of belief and behavior. Specific objectives in population communication include bolstering staff morale, developing awareness and acceptance of parental responsibility, and changing attitudes toward ideal family size.

**Motivation:** the purpose of this type of communications is to change perceptions of wants or needs by establishing a connection between family planning practice and gratification of existing wants. Such messages are persuasive in tone and prescriptive in nature. Most of the "social marketing" communications, examined in Chapter 4, concentrate on this objective.

**Legitimation:** "... creating a climate of opinion in which talk about sex and contraception is not considered furtive, embarrassing, shameful, or 'dirty', but rather is viewed as commonplace and matter-of-fact, a climate in which contraceptive practice is accepted as being respectable and proper" (Saunders, 1967, pp. 7-8). This objective may often be achieved as a "by-product" of other communications. The mass media often help achieve this objective by showing leaders of a society "endorsing" family planning. Many experts consider that the print media are particularly useful for this purpose, perhaps because they are often the oldest mass media and because of the permanence of the printed word which can be more easily reused in a communication program than the rather impermanent words and images of radio and television. Repetition of messages can be a powerful persuader—be it a soft drink TV ad or newspapers mentioning a religious leader talking about family planning.
One of the larger surprises to many population experts has been the speed with which this "legitimation" of family planning has been achieved, even in quite traditional and conservative societies. In the strongly Catholic Philippines, for instance, the transition from family planning as almost a taboo phrase to its wide use in media headlines was achieved in less than a decade, with the media themselves playing a positive role in the process.

Reinforcement and reassurance: converts to new attitudes and knowledge can have these attitudes and knowledge reinforced by communications and be reassured about their changed behavior. In many societies there is a large job to be done among political and social elites: reinforcing politicians' stands on family planning and establishing family planning as a norm of national, community, and family life. Users of the newer contraceptives can often be reassured by messages putting the "dangers" of these contraceptives into perspective.

With these last two objectives there is the "by-product" effect achieved from the other type of communications. But there are many messages that can be designed specifically for these purposes: briefing documents for political and social leaders, newspaper articles aimed at these elites that describe the global population phenomena, policy alternatives, and implications both internationally and nationally. Letters to the editor, guest speakers, commissioned articles, and programs... can all be used effectively by the population communicator.

The general promotion of discussion about all aspects of population is itself a major objective. In part the population communicator needs many of the skills of the press agent or publicist in recognizing the countless " pegs " on which to hang the population message.

Saunders also points out that one message can often achieve more than one of the objectives, and most of the time this may not matter. But as a rough rule of thumb—to be used when there is a question about which approach to use—he suggests: "inform first; attempt to educate when information alone is not getting results; use motivational appeals when nothing else seems to work" (Saunders, 1967, p. 7).
Against this background of "why" we need population communications, Saunders also gives a general, non-exhaustive list of the "whats" of population communications—the specific functions. They are:

1. Developing understanding about fertility, population growth, national development and individual/family health and welfare. (The media have been relatively heavily used in this area. For instance, the Press Foundation of Asia's feature service, Depthnews has been supplying Asian newspapers with weekly packets of stories about economic development and population implications for several years. The information programs of such bodies as IPPF, UNFPA, UNESCO, and WHO have also contributed to expanding this flow of information.);

2. Developing and strengthening opinions and attitudes favorable to family planning and the small family norm;

3. Providing general and technical information to appropriate publics, audiences, or groups;

4. Providing motivation, stimulation, and occasions for discussion leading toward community consensus and decision;

5. Influencing norms and values;

6. Aiding in the acquisition of new skills and habits; and

7. Building a level of knowledge in which rumor and misinformation cannot flourish, and legitimating the practice of family planning.

This, then, is the conceptual framework to public information activity as part of population communications. If only the real world could be as straightforward. We have already discussed some of the intrinsic problems of population and communication. The media are the bridge we must use between the two, and we should examine our problems with media further.

Problems with the media: two major problems are quickly evident in population's dealings with the mass media: 1) the extent
or "reach" of the media being used for population communications and 2) population communicators' success in gaining access to the media and thereby its audience.

1). **Media reach**: as Saunders has pointed out, development and communications are symbiotic. Many of the countries now adopting population policies and programs are the developing countries where the media are also in a state of development. Reaching the populations of developing countries with any message is a more difficult operation than in, say, America, where the communicator can count on virtually every member of the population having access to radio, television, movies, or print media. In many developing countries, the mass media, especially print media, reach only the elites—often the literate minorities living in urban areas: media facilities are simply scarcer than in developing countries. To transmit the population message—any message—to the mass of the population in developing countries often needs much greater effort, resources, and creativity than in developed societies. In many countries, population communicators have had considerable successes but it is important to remember that communications in a developing country is a relatively harder task and that, because of this, there are few universal solutions. The population communicator in a developing country needs to work much harder in what is usually a much less encouraging media situation. The efforts of Taiwan, Korea, and Jamaica in this regard are particularly instructive.

2). **Access to media**: in much of the population communications literature there are constant references to "using the media" and similar expressions. The references are not wrong per se but when seen together with other communications problems with population—the cultural complexities surrounding reproductive behavior, the medical jargon, the middle class/elitist atmosphere of many family planning clinics—such references may not always be conducive to efficient communications. This may well be personal prejudice but, as a media practitioner, I feel somewhat perturbed about being "used" by the population communicators. "Use" can imply "control." I have a similarly vague instinctive feeling that when population communicators are told to "use the media," they view the process rather like buying (or soliciting) the ingredients for baking a loaf of bread instead of contributing their share to a vital, all-embracing exercise.
These feelings, nurtured by numerous interviews over the past five years with population communicators, are resurrected by remarks such as "the media are means to ends; it is up to us to decide the ends and to compel the means to serve them." My response as a media practitioner is a loud "raspberry." Such statements take a far too simplistic view of the media's role in population communications. The mistake may well arise from taking a purely marketing view of population communications. To sell shoes, the communicator would expect to buy most of the media space or time. As we shall see later, social marketing has enormous potential, but the full range of population communication objectives and functions can rarely be accomplished if the messages can only reach the audiences via advertising channels. For example, the cost of briefing a country's legislators about international population implications would itself take most of any media budget.

Population communications need to infiltrate all media channels, editorial as well as advertising. It may be useful therefore to suggest that population communications be seen as a "lobby" or pressure group fighting for its share of media space and time along with all other groups with a similar media objective. Population has no preordained right to a share of media channels. There is no absolute necessity for any media operation to donate space or time to population messages.

The point can easily be overstated but the "lobby" view should make it easier for population communicators to get a more realistic view of the media and how it works. Resources are in just as finite supply in the media as elsewhere: only a finite number of words and images can be slotted into media output, and there is considerable competition for that time and space. And because of the more restricted range of media in developing countries, this competition for media exposure may be even greater in those places.

Population communicators should strive, therefore, to develop a partner's relationship with the media rather than an employer's or director's. The media practitioner may well sympathize fully with the views and messages produced by the population communicator but, professionally, he or she cannot ignore the facts that some doctors do say the pill is dangerous in certain conditions and some women do have IUDs inserted which cause discomfort or are
dispelled. Even if we were all fully convinced of the population "cause," the expert propagandist would recognize that it is not sufficient to have our case stated in the media without any real discussion. Discussion begets involvement which begets "converts." For the population communicator, the discussion can start with the media practitioners who are the gateway to the media audience. Critics who accuse the media of concentrating on conflict often fail to recognize the very real opportunities offered by such situations.

Perhaps these rather general and theoretical remarks can be concluded with an analogy from a former colleague. He often referred to the mass media as "the public megaphone." His concern was that governments were getting too many hands on the megaphone and dictating what was shouted. The concern of the population communicator is similarly to get a hand on the megaphone and know what to say. It is not necessarily to buy another megaphone. Certainly it is not to shout unaided against the public one.

The population lobby can also reflect just how well it has competed for "megaphone" time with other international lobbyists—the ecologists, the food people, and so on.
CHAPTER 3
What Are the Media?
What Can They Do for Us?

This chapter examines the variety of ways population messages have been distributed by the mass media. The range of media involved over the last decade is almost total—from satellite television to religious orators. The examples cited are not meant to be a comprehensive list, but more an illustration of the variety of media available for public information. Advertising messages and techniques are dealt with separately in another chapter.

RADIO

In 1972 a UNESCO meeting on research in family planning communication said that, on available information, "radio is undoubtedly the most popular mass medium intensively being used for family planning diffusion in many developing countries."

There can be little doubt that this is the case. Radio has the largest global audience of any mass medium and it can be reached easily, quickly, and cheaply. By correct timing of the message, it is also possible to reach specific subsections of these audiences. It is also a fair generalization to note that radio in many developing countries is government-owned and/or controlled; thus if the government has generally taken a pro-population stand, then radio time is made available to population programs. (The same could not be said about the print medium which is, generally, still privately owned.)

The distribution of cheap radios has increased radio's importance. In reference to family planning information in the 1970's Schramm notes, in 1971, that despite the excitement over new communications technology (the home information center, cable TV, etc.) there was no sign of developing countries being able to "... leapfrog over a generation of communication development. Rather,
the great development of the 1970's is going to be the spread of low-priced radios into every village and remote corner of these countries.

"In the 1970's, for the first time, we are going to have a universal medium in the new countries. The basic channel for rural development and out-of-school education and, I suspect, family planning, is going to be radio. Television will continue to grow, the satellite will be of some use in the 1980's, but radio is here now, waiting to be used" (Schramm, 1971 (c), p. 2).

Broadly, there are three uses for radio:

1. short, 30-second to one-minute, spot announcements describing contraceptives and their availability;

2. two-to three-minute public service announcements describing reasons for family planning, advantages, and disadvantages of contraception, general population education.

3. longer programs where population-related messages can be integrated with other messages. Virtually all program formats—from soap operas and disc jockey shows to educational talks—can carry population messages.

The shorter formats obviously lend themselves more for specific population messages, whereas the longer general programs allow for a much more integrated and "smuggled" set of population messages.

India has pioneered in involving radio in support of family planning. All India Radio (AIR) reaches nearly all of the vast population and there are about 15 million radio receivers, more than the total daily newspaper circulation. (We should note that statistics on the number of radio receivers in many developing countries are unreliable; often they only give the number of licensed sets, not the actual number.) By 1968, AIR had set up family planning units in 22 of its stations. Each unit had a coordinator, a reporter, and an extension officer. From June 1968 to March 1969, 5,818 programs and spot announcements on family planning were broadcast. Commercial stations broadcast 2,700 items during the same period.

India also pioneered radio rural forums which during the
1960's were extended to include family planning as well as agricultural information. Regular programs are beamed to groups of people meeting at a home or in public places. The broadcast also serves as the basis for discussion, thus linking mass communication with interpersonal communication.

Korea and Taiwan were also among the first countries to use radio. Taiwan is a particularly useful example in that the communication program has been well-researched and documented. The mass media were not really brought into the population program until 1967, when a national population policy was adopted. Initial surveys quickly showed that there was misinformation and a lack of knowledge about family planning and that radio was the most effective channel for reaching fertile women. Radio, of course, made no distinctions about whether the women were literate or not.

Taiwan used a large variety of radio program formats for carrying population and family planning messages. One of the most widespread was the popular Chinese operas/dramas. Popular dramas—or "soap operas"—have also been used with great effect in many other countries.

In the Philippines, for instance, a daily radio drama entitled "Mr. & Mrs." has been running since 1973. The 30-minute drama is broadcast over 18 stations of the Philippine Federation of Catholic Broadcasters. Five other stations also take the show, which goes out in four local dialects. The drama is written around a family in a rural town: the father is the local police chief, the mother is a school teacher, and there are four children. There is a new episode every week, and each episode is composed of six separate dramas which are broadcast from Monday to Saturday. The first five shows all end with a "cliffhanger", and the climax comes on Saturday. The program features a coordinator who talks "live" for five minutes after each drama. The coordinator is a woman working in family welfare. She answers fan mail, comments on the story, and becomes a friend and advisor to the audience. She advises and refers people to the family life centers in the district and encourages them to see for themselves what is happening there. There is a separate coordinator for each of the 18 stations.

The radio shows are also supported by pamphlets on family planning and pre-marriage instruction—in the four dialects plus
The pamphlets are distributed through the radio stations and have generated considerable fan mail. There are several instances of listeners walking miles to get the pamphlets. Each 30-minute drama is produced with four one-minute breaks for commercials, a practice which encourages the stations to air the show during prime time. The characters in the drama have now been incorporated into the comic strips of local newspapers.

An even longer running soap opera is the Dialogo program in Costa Rica, which has been running six days a week since 1970. The show is broadcast on the country's most popular commercial radio station which has national coverage. Four local stations also use it. The program is broadcast at 4:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m., both prime time slots for rural audiences. It is aimed at parents although many children listen too. Program content is written or taped initially by a professional broadcaster, and then reviewed by the program director before being back to the broadcaster for final recording. The program reaches 25-30 percent of Costa Rica's population of two million, making it the most popular educational program. The show is sponsored by the Family Orientation Center, which reinforces the messages with its correspondence courses for engaged couples and parents: also, it provides some 60 pamphlets in Spanish. Themes are developed for series of two to six programs and include topics such as nutrition, responsible parenthood, family planning, marriage, divorce, reproduction, employment, venereal disease, alcoholism, etc.

These two formats demonstrate the great potential of radio: the popular format attracts the audience but still allows for the inclusion of "serious" messages. And the fictional format allows for a wide range of realistic situations.

Programs such as these also tend to be exceptional among the general experience of developing countries in that they have secured a place for themselves in the popular culture of their countries. In many countries, it is unfortunately the case that radio programming is encased in a rather traditional straitjacket which simply does not allow the day-to-day concerns of large sections of the population to be reflected in the widest range of programs.

As an instance, we might ask why the whole field of popular music has not been more "exploited" by the population lobby—
why the disc jockeys who purvey so much of this music have not been more involved as "change agents." The huge audiences for popular music, Western or otherwise, are often prime targets for population messages, as even the briefest examination of the lyrics would demonstrate. Yet there is, too often, an attitude that "development" or "population" are topics too lofty for inclusion in popular entertainment programs. Yet it can be done, and often very easily: one disc jockey converted to the population cause is a much better investment than a whole series of expensively produced talk shows.

We should also note the success of a population pop song produced with UNICEF help in Tanzania: it quickly became top of the Tanzanian hit parade.

Often the bureaucratic nature of many broadcasting systems does not encourage the widest diffusion of development or population information. Speaking about African broadcasting, Alex Quarmyne says, "... as broadcasters we must remember that we exist and live as whole people: our audiences should not receive 'development' as a single package but as something which affects the whole of their lives. Thus 'development' affects every area of broadcast programming.... Most of our African broadcasting systems were based on the BBC system with neat compartments for talks, drama, news and current affairs, education, etc. But this system has no compartment for development, which provides opportunities and drawbacks: the opportunity to infiltrate development messages into all programs and the drawback that we are conditioned by compartments and find it difficult to program 'development'. Above all we need to learn to see all our programs as educational" (Quarmyne, 1976).

Thus the disc jockey should be just as much a development communicator as the producer of family planning talk shows. Radio may be becoming the universal medium but the potential still has to face up to several problems.

Ignoring the technical difficulties of transmitting and receiving, which can be assumed to diminish over time, of more direct concern is the quality of material produced for radio. The 1972 UNESCO meeting gave four reasons for this: 1) shortage of funds which limited the employment of professional producers and use of the best material; 2) media personnel producing material more
suited to educated, well-to-do audiences of the past rather than today's genuinely mass audience; 3) certain types of information not being suited for radio transmission (local details on a national program, morally/ethically unsuitable information, etc.); and 4) lack of research about the communication process. 8

Adhikarya and Radel point to three other significant problem areas:

1. **Lack of program control over free broadcast time.** Most (population) programs are given free access to one or more media, generally radio and TV, which are often government operated. These same media, however, take paid advertising, and hence the hours when public service announcements are aired are generally those when the audience is smaller. In any case, the (population program) people rarely are permitted to specify when their material should be used in order to reach their special audiences most effectively.

2. **Lack of follow-up with radio.** Family planning programs aired over the radio are usually not followed by any interpersonal communication effort. In general, radio can best inform 'what' and 'where' in regard to family planning. Radio forums or listener groups are needed to help motivate listeners to become acceptors. In addition, some households in the developing countries still do not have radios but through listening groups they too could be exposed to radio messages.

3. **Difficulties in localization of radio programs.** Not many local radio stations are available in the developing countries, therefore, it is very difficult to localize radio programs that will suit the needs of different groups. Yet cultural differences from one part of the country to the next can be great (Adhikarya and Radel, 1975, p. 6).

On this last point we must note, however, that there does seem to be a trend toward greater localization of radio programming and it seems a safe assumption that this will continue. I am interested in the so-called "centre-periphery" concept of communications: for too long, much of our mass communications has concerned the "centre" talking to the "periphery," with obvious problems of understanding and feedback and so on. New communications technology is now having the effect of enabling the periphery to talk to
Itself. The phone-in radio show offers a new dimension of instant feedback.

(Also, as I write this paper, in England, the radio is my background noise and I am intrigued to notice just how many mentions of "family planning" and "contraception" can be and are included in music and chat shows aimed primarily at housewives.)

PRINT MEDIUM

There can be few newspapers or general interest magazines in the world which have never carried a "population" story, either about local or international initiatives. The larger audiences registered for the electronic media often tend to hide the capacities and potential of print. True, the print medium may not be read by as many people as those who listen to radio or watch TV but, generally, newspapers transmit a much greater volume of information. We must remember the old saying that one column of newspaper type would take at least ten minutes to read at radio speed.

The print medium's main use to population communications is therefore to transmit those messages which involve large volumes of information, for example, articles explaining the need for a population policy, how it might be achieved, how such initiatives are proceeding, scientific/medical stories about contraception and contraceptives, and the relationship between population growth and economic development. Any examination of library clippings shows that this is exactly where the print medium's population coverage has concentrated--the areas of information and education rather than motivation.

The print medium's other great advantage is its permanence; stories can be re-read, clipped, filed, duplicated, stored, and generally recycled much more easily and economically than the program material of other media. Again, despite the almost exponential growth of electronic media, print is still the backbone of communications. When messages are being processed in any of the mass media, they inevitably pass through the written form at some stage. Our knowledge of population communication, for instance, exists primarily in written form: clippings, books, papers, etc. Any major information exercise cannot therefore afford to ignore the
the print foundations. And the print medium is still the basic training ground for other media personnel. Today's newspaper reporter is often found on tomorrow's radio and television programs.

But the print medium does have severe drawbacks, especially in developing countries. Its audiences are smaller, generally, than the electronic media's and they are concentrated in the urban areas.

The impact of the printed message is also generally less than that of the electronic medium. In Marshall McLuhan's terms, print is "cool"—it involves only one of our senses, while the electronic media are "hot." Few newspaper stories could ever achieve the impact of Coca Cola's electronic and visual attempts at teaching the world to sing.

So what has the print medium done with population?

Before any population policy can be formulated, even discussed, the leaders of a society need information, and lots of it. Even if and when they go through with that policy, the need for information continues, perhaps at an even greater level.

In Ghana, one of the pioneers of planned population communications, the press was involved extensively—commissioned articles, interviews with leaders on the population question, as well as advertisements saying: "Ask about it. Think about it. Talk about it."

The Philippines' press were deeply involved in the late 1960's and 1970's in making population and contraception an acceptable topic of public discussion. Media personnel and their professional body, the Philippine Press Institute, were involved in nearly all public discussions of the population issue. This led to a large volume of coverage concerning both Philippine and international population issues and even training of media personnel to cover the population story. In a remarkably short period the elites had been stimulated into discussing the population issue and, just as quickly, formulating and activating a massive population program.

The city-states of Hong Kong and Singapore have also involved the press extensively in their population programs. The Malaysian press in recent years has carried most of the official family planning board's communication output.
In India, the press has long taken an interest in the population issue. Commissioned articles in English do get translated into the major Indian languages.

The increase in the print medium's coverage of population is undoubtedly a global trend. I can find no instance of a population program ignoring the print medium.

There are a variety of "doors" to the print medium for population information; many of which of course apply to other media.

News

One of the oldest definitions of news is that "news is people." A little semantic juggling should produce "news is population" or even "population is news." The experience of the last two decades is mixed. Certain parts of the population story (rapid population growth, the dangers of oral contraceptives) have been covered extensively by news medium, while others have not (implications of "young" populations, descriptions of how human life has changed with contraception).

The international news agencies have been responsible for much of this increased flow of information, as well as the increased interest in the population issue by some of the world's major newspapers. The information services of international population agencies have also developed considerable volumes of packaged material for media use.

But perhaps the area of greatest failure has been at the information officer level of the new population programs. Perhaps because of over-bureaucratic structures or inactive local media or lack of professional skills, many population information programs have not exploited the opportunities, which occur almost daily, to interest the media in their activities. Population information programs would improve considerably if all their information officers had the skills of a competent reporter.

An example of this failure may well be the World Population Year (WPY) and especially the World Population Conference. News coverage was generated in the build-up to the conference and during the debate itself, for example, there was coverage just as long as
someone else was doing it—the UN information machine, the news agencies, the news medium. But unfortunately after the conference, the information bubble burst. WPY budgets ceased and few local programs took that wealth of information generated at the international level and recycled it for local consumption over time. News and information are continuous processes and need to be recognized as such.

Feature Stories, Special Articles

This area of print medium's coverage has offered one of the main outlets for population information for several reasons, including the facts that: features are often less immediately tied to the day's events and thus are easier for the medium to place; the use of "big name" authors improves the medium's usage; production of such features can be more easily stimulated by non-media agencies than hard news coverage; and there are several feature agencies offering such materials. The "print medium kit" is now an established product of major international agencies. Feature services like Gemini of London, which concentrates on reporting events of the developing world, include a considerable volume of population-related stories in its output. At the national level, it is often quite straightforward to secure articles from political leaders, helped by their publicity writers. The generally increased coverage of population by the major print medium has correspondingly increased the supply of material for syndication.

A more unusual development has been the establishment of a few feature agencies with coverage of population as one of their main functions. Depthnews has already been mentioned and its basic organization has now been replicated in Latin America; the Middle East may soon embark on a similar venture.

Depthnews began in Manila in 1969 with a grant from the Ford Foundation to the Press Foundation of Asia (PFA), an association of about 100 Asian newspaper publishers. As part of the PFA's efforts to generally improve the press, the Ford grant helped start a small feature service, aimed as much at the small newspapers that are unable to buy expensive features as at the more prosperous papers. The service consisted of a weekly packet of eight, development-related feature stories ready for publication, that was distributed to about 150 newspapers; at least one of the stories was con-
cerned directly with population. Usage was encouraging although penetration of the largest Asian newspapers was not high, perhaps because the service was free. In the 1970's, with increased funds from the UN Fund for Population Activities, the Depthnews service was expanded; the regional service was maintained from Manila but separate national editions were started in India, Korea, and Indonesia. A Philippine edition, which already existed, was expanded. The national editions not only translated some of the regional stories into dialects but also generated most of their own output, still with the general rule of about one story in eight being directly concerned with population. A more recent addition to the service was the Regional Reference Service, developed as an information resource base to back up Depthnews and other journalistic endeavors.

In 1974, Depthnews was reported to be subscribed to by 220 publications in English and 500 vernacular publications in 13 Asian countries. Total per issue circulation of publications using the service was more than 3.5 million copies. Actual usage of the material differed considerably by size of outlet, with the smaller papers making greatest use. On the average, probably at least half of the stories would be used by each subscriber.

Depthnews is still no Reuters or Associated Press, but it has pioneered a channel for population information to a large number of Asian newspapers. In many cases this was a breach through which other population information could follow. Its growth also helped identify and train a small group of Asian journalists with an interest in population matters. The largest problems facing the service in the most recent years have been those of making the financial transition from being funded to being self-supporting and of improving the service sufficiently to attract sufficient fee-paying subscribers. But the field of media coverage and the market are established.

Through UNFPA assistance, an organization similar to the PFA with a service similar to Depthnews was established in 1974 in Latin America. ALACODE, the Latin American Development Communicators Association, was established by a group of journalists with help from UNFPA and it runs a population news service in newspaper format, El Demographico.

With the growth of population communications, the supply of
people able to produce editorial feature material has also increased considerably over the last few years. Of course, not all programs can afford such people; hence, part of the need is to cultivate media personnel and the information staff of social and political leaders.

Editorials

Involving the print medium in the population discussion is a valid target of population communications, although it is somewhat more complicated than others. Most newspapers like to express their opinions, but the wrong approach, or an uninformed one, can produce counterproductive results. The best general rules are to supply as much information as possible to the media and to get to know the personnel before making editorial suggestions.

Columns

There are several examples of successful infiltration of population messages here—both to existing columns and the creation of new columns.

One of the best documented examples of a new "population column" is the "Gloria Riggsbee" exercise in the United States. The educational materials unit at the Carolina Population Center developed their own question-and-answer column, based on the successful, nationally syndicated Ann Landers column. Staff at the center wanted to get population messages to local women and offered the column free to newspapers. Readers ask the questions and the Center Staff answers them in the column. The column started in 1968 and was carried in 40 newspapers by 1972.

The greatest difficulty with developing a new column is that of sustaining it over time. The "Gloria Riggsbee" column needed the Carolina Population Center behind it. In most parts of the world it will be much easier to "infiltrate" existing columns, which will demand both a keen knowledge of local media situations and personalities and a good supply of information from the population communicator. In the Philippines, where the newspapers have a strong tradition of outspoken columnists, population messages have had good exposure—from gossip paragraphs about population personnel and even jokes about contraceptives to discussions of the serious population issues.
Women's feature pages around the world have been a ready channel for discussion of population and family planning issues. Certainly family planning messages should not be restricted to women's pages. But the legacy of family planning's clinical origins still lingers. In contrast, one of the breakthroughs of the last decade has been that population stories have surfaced on the news pages. Recent readership research indicates that women's pages are often read as much by men as by women.

The advantage of getting the population message into the columns is that it is transmitted in a much more popular "voice" than other newspaper messages, which are made to conform to the more stylized editorial constructions. Columnists who survive also acquire regular readerships and undoubtedly influence many of those readers. The difficulties to be faced are, first, finding your columnist and, second, supplying enough information (or simply trusting) that the message is not lost in the presentation.

Photographs

Good pictures are worth thousands of words but they are also expensive and in short supply. With a few exceptions—like Rajeev Sethi's exhibit at the Bucharest World Population Conference and some of Mark Edwards' work in IPPF's People magazine—the use of still photographs in population communication has not been very successful. Most field offices are not geared to producing good photographs and few news photographers are ever sufficiently well-briefed on the complexities of population to secure anything more than "cliche" shots—teeming squatter settlements, poverty headshots, and hordes of children. Since children photograph well, the effect is often counterproductive. The only bright spot is the use of photographs in materials produced as part of commercial marketing campaigns; this material is, however, generally produced on a subcontract basis. The media have generally been left to secure their own population photographs.

Cartoons

These have been more extensively used, although mainly in materials produced by population programs rather than for distribution through the print medium. Of all the media skills, the cartoonist's is the most highly individual—and therefore most difficult
to influence by the outsider. In most circumstances, sending a supply of information and ideas is the best an information officer can hope to do.

In self-produced materials, however, there have been numerous successful uses of printed cartoons. The general experience is that the simplified graphics enable the message to be presented more strongly, while avoiding too much embarrassing personal identification by the receiver. However, we must also recognize that there has been a large number of bad cartoons.

**Special Supplements or Editions**

This can be a valuable technique in population programs. Usually it involves the program agreeing to buy a certain volume of copies of a publication in return for editorial space devoted to population. The tactic has been more generally used with magazines than with newspapers, although the daily *Bangkok Post* did carry a population supplement in 1971. The advantages are that the program receives good exposure to a wide audience without having to invest in costly print production. In Taiwan, the population program has used this tactic successfully several times, usually with women's magazines. But one successful case involved an economics magazine: the program bought 11,500 copies of one issue focusing on population and mailed out 3,000 of them with a covering letter to high-ranking government and civic leaders; another 8,000 copies were used as a training booklet at a government-training institute. The cost to the project for the 50-page issue was about US$0.10 per copy, including postage.

No distinction has been drawn here between general interest and specialized publications and these remarks apply to both. The main distinction affecting the population communicator concerns the audience to be reached. General interest publications may be considered to include a high proportion of "wasted" readers (for example, those not considered as prime targets for population and family planning messages), whereas the audiences of specialized publications (women, doctors, economists, politicians, etc.) offer a direct route to the prime target audience. We must beware of simplistic distinctions, however; a woman past childbearing age may not be a prime target for family planning messages, but she may have a significant influence on her children's reproductive behavior. Similarly, there is the two- or multi-step flow of infor-
mation whereby media messages may only reach elites and leaders directly but the messages are passed on to their followers.

Although the print medium is generally regarded primarily as a channel for reaching elite audiences, it has been used to reach other audiences. A particularly imaginative example was the family planning comics in the Philippines. Between January 1970 and July 1971, nearly six million comics in five languages were distributed throughout the country. A new comic appeared monthly and the content was simple story lines with family planning messages. The comics were entirely produced in the Philippines from a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) grant. The grant was not renewed, but the reasons for this appear to concern distribution problems rather than conceptual ones.

FILMS

An enormous amount of money has been spent on producing films related to population and family planning. Film making is undeniably an expensive process but there must be considerable doubt whether the results have justified the expenditure. It might be kinder to say that there have been several excellent films produced which have been shown to large audiences but the wastage rate has been high.

A UNESCO meeting in 1972 reported that film "is not fully exploited by family planning" (UNESCO, 1972, A/1, p. 11). Exploitation is the key word: there are now thousands of films in existence but very few of them are being put to work. Nearly all the major international agencies interested in population maintain libraries of films, film strips, and other audio-visual materials such as slide sets and film loops. However, the use of films is low—for two reasons: problems of content and problems of distribution. There are other problems related to projectors, such as expense and maintenance.

Content

The 1972 UNESCO meeting also reported that "documentary films on family planning are often overloaded with information on population projections, economics of population control, philosophy of birth control, national values, personal values, methods of
family planning and similar types of information" (UNESCO, 1972, A/1, p. 20). More consideration should have been given to the target audiences' capacity to absorb and assimilate information.

Film content is also affected by the professional caliber of the film makers. In many countries these specialized skills are not well-developed and the result is a morass of badly-made films which are quickly consigned to library shelves.

Distribution

It is perhaps another legacy of bureaucratism in many population programs that the production of a film is often seen as the end of the process rather than the beginning. The end of a film exercise should only be when the celluloid disintegrates through long use. This is rarely the case, primarily because the communications personnel have not made sufficient efforts to reach the audiences who would be interested in the film. In the developing countries especially, this is a major task to be faced: knowledge of audiences is not always complete; commercial film distribution channels may not be well developed; even finding a projector can be a considerable barrier.

It should be noted, however, that population films appear to have fared no better or worse than films on other topics by other organizations. The United Nations films, for instance, are also under-used.

Against this, the potential of film must be recognized: it is mobile, repeatable, and can reach an audience as well as television can. It can also be easily "plugged in" to television. Given the problems of producing television programming in many developing countries, there must be a good market for well-made population films.

From personal experience in journalism training programs, I can also vouch for the beneficial effects of good films--both in raising awareness and in promoting discussion. *Writings in the Sand* and *Standing Room Only* are two titles which spring readily to mind.

In recent years, efforts have begun to remedy some of the worst faults in film making and distribution. UNESCO, with UNFPA
funding, has established the International Audio-Visual Resources Service to serve as a clearing house and resource center for population film materials. The center is based in the London IPPF offices with a South East Asian office in the Philippines.

Such efforts are greatly needed and it will be some time before film is efficiently used as a truly mass medium in population programs. The first steps in improving the situation should be a much keener appreciation of what the film is intended to say, how much it will cost, how and where it will be used, and whether the resources would be more cost-efficient elsewhere.

A related, and more successful, use of film has been as part of the output of mobile audio-visual units which have been used in several countries, including India, Malaysia, and Pakistan. These units can happily mix entertainment messages with informational ones, can reach deep into rural areas, and generally can become a significant factor in community life. In some countries, India and Turkey especially, there is a team of doctors providing loop insertions and sterilizations in conjunction with the audio-visual teams.

TELEVISION

Television is the latest recruit to the population communicator's armory. In most developing countries, television has not yet developed the reach of radio and it will take considerable time before that situation exists. But the most significant fact about television is not so much its great power but its rapid growth. In Taiwan, in about four years, population communicators saw television grow from being a minority channel to the second most important after radio. The experience in many developing countries is similar.

And television is increasingly being used for population communications with considerable effect, despite its primarily elitist and urban audience, and the much greater costs of production. The type of messages carried by television have been advertising/public service spots and more lengthy awareness-raising programs.

In India, however, the SITE (Satellite Instructional Tele-
vision Experiment) project is currently exploring new ground in development communications using specially-prepared programming for group television audiences in 4,000 villages. Population is one of the four major program subjects.

Despite the potential of television, however, the consensus is that it will not be a major medium for population communications for many years. In the developing countries its reach is severely limited and the costs involved in television production everywhere are enormous.

POSTERS

Experience is mixed on the use of posters. In the early days, Taiwan and Korea received negative feedback from field-workers who said they had no budget to put them up, people did not want them on their walls, children tore them down, they disintegrated in wet weather, they were easily defaced, posting them was difficult and time-consuming, and people were not attracted by them anyway.

These reactions almost typify reactions to the worst type of poster campaigns--where the program director simply calls for a set of posters and distributes them with no pretesting of appearance and message. Everett M. Rogers quotes a vignette from Frank Wilder about posters being produced to satisfy the graphic tastes of the artist rather than to communicate effectively. There are other problems, too. The audience may be graphically illiterate, not knowing what arrows and other graphic symbols mean, they may find the drawings morally offensive or overly simplistic.

But posters can be effective if produced carefully with an eye to the communications job to be done. C.G. Bowen describes how China has made "enormous use of posters, handwritten, home made, each a creation of an individual communicator. What is interesting is not their range of content--slogans, prose, comic strips, cartoons, letters, tables, graphs, songs--but their quantity, reports being given of 10,000 being hung in a single factory, and over 500,000 in one shipyard. The impact of hand made messages in such density has to be considerable" (Bowen, 1972, p. 2/19).
(Perhaps there is a Chinese secret to posters: quantity is as im-
portant as quality.)

In 1971, O. D. Finnigan concluded that, on the evidence from
Korea and Taiwan, family planning posters had not had much posi-
tive impact. 11 The two countries had, however, still kept their
eyes open for empty spaces that could be used to carry family plan-
ning messages. In both countries, contracts were made with paper
matchbook manufacturers. In Taiwan the largest match company
pasted a colored sticker with the family planning message on the
blank face of their matchbooks. The population program paid for
the printing and adhesion, plus a fee. For an investment of US$6,500
they put a message on ten million books of matches, which
represented 80 percent of all the matches produced in Taiwan for
two months. Finnigan pointed out that one multicolored poster cost
the equivalent of 500 matchbox ads.

Taiwan also used automobile bumper and window stickers
and display space in buses and trains. Messages could be quite
specific: "Tired of chasing cabs? Practice Family Planning!"
And the stickers generally escaped vandalism.

In Korea the family planning program provided message
boards in tearooms for about US$2 apiece. In the summer months,
tearoom patrons could cool themselves with family planning fans
costing about US$0.02 each. In an article in UNICEF News (Issue
84, 1975, No. 2) Björn Berndtson says that, "with few exceptions,
there has been little progress in both the quality and quantity of
posters advertising family planning. Many merely repeat vague
messages already known and consequently cease to be challenging."

Berndtson gives three major points for improving posters:

- **Posters must have a purpose** rather than being general-
ized 'shotgun' reminders about population 'the new gener-
ation of posters should deal with highly specific problems
and obstacles.' And there should be a much wider variety,
causing the viewers to re-examine their thoughts on the
subject.

- **Posters must have a good design** many posters violate
the basic principles that govern effective communication via
public display. Discussion and review of these principles and their application to the production of family planning posters should be encouraged.

- Posters must be pre-tested on the real audience rather than the boss of the population program (Berndston, 1975, p. 2).

FOLK MEDIA

Increasing attention is being paid to the sending of population and development messages through such traditional communications channels as folk songs, dances, mimes, shadow and puppet plays, and the traditional theater.

K. B. Mathur of UNESCO told a 1974 meeting in New Delhi that "behavioural change directly attributable to mass media varies from 10 to 15 percent and this percentage goes up to 54 percent when the mass media and extension work are integrated." He suggested that behavioral change could well be further increased if mass media integrated with extension work was further integrated with folk media. 12

Research in this field is still in its early days, however, and while there is almost no suggestion that folk media should not be used, there is considerable uncertainty about how much new information can be infiltrated into these traditional forms without severely altering or even destroying the channel. All communicators are faced with problems of audience, culture, localization, and language; with the traditional media all these factors are even more important. The forms are often competing for survival with the newer communications media and the threshold for absorbing new information appears quite low.

Many countries are involving traditional media in their communication efforts: wayang kulit shadow plays in the Malay world, singers and dancers in Iran, puppets in Egypt, folk theater in Sri Lanka, opera in Korea, and many more examples.

It is India, however, which has the greatest documented experience with traditional media. For several years the Ministry
of Information and Broadcasting has had a song and drama division which has used puppeteers, traveling drama and ballet groups, folk singers, poets, and religious orators. Songs and scripts on family planning are written for these artists who are paid a nominal sum for using the materials in their performances.

Perhaps the greatest possibilities of folk media are to be found less in the volume of "new" messages, which can be added to them, than in the extension possibilities offered for other messages in other media. Folk media "programs" can easily be fed into print, film, and broadcasting output to reach much greater audiences. At the other end of the communications spectrum, they can also be the launching pad for inter-personal communications. In certain cases, the folk artists themselves can be trained to act as extension workers.

SYMBOLS

One of the more dismaying aspects of the recent growth of short-run print technology has been the profusion of symbols on printed materials. Apparently, no organization is complete without its own logo. Unfortunately the graphic standards of most of these symbols have been low.

This should not hide the fact, however, that a good symbol can be an effective communications device. Private sector communications relating to mass consumption goods have long relied on symbols as an integral part of developing "brand image." Population communications have also provided several recent examples of good, efficient symbols.

The Indian example is perhaps the best known. In the mid-1960's India's population communicators despaired of ever getting their message through to their diverse, distant, and enormous audiences. As part of a major policy switch to simplification of population communications, the Indian program developed its Red Triangle strategy. Instead of trying to convey vague ideas of fewer people, smaller families, or population control through graphic representation, the Department of Family Planning looked for the simplest of designs with no prior meaning or connotation. They hoped, and were soon proved correct, that such a symbol would produce a distinct and exclusive association with family planning.
The Red Triangle--equilateral with apex down--soon was displayed wherever contraceptives were sold or distributed. The triangle also appeared wherever the program's new simplified slogans were displayed. And the family planning message did get through--past literacy barriers and without requiring great artistic talent.

Some countries have since adopted the Red Triangle for their own family planning programs--Tunisia and Ghana, for example--and it is perhaps a matter of regret that it could not have been adopted internationally as the family planning symbol. In the mid-1960's, in fact, the Population Council did consider the development of an international symbol. But the arrival of the Red Triangle, and the desire of many countries to have their own symbols, ended the international symbol search.

Distinction should be made between the symbols for population programs as a whole (the Red Triangle) and the logos developed for brands of contraceptives, which are produced along conventional advertising/marketing lines. The distinction is really between symbols of corporate identity and logos for brand image.

GIMMICKS

This is not a facetious heading, rather it is a convenience for mentioning several exercises which have been undertaken to create interest, such as:

- Ringing a bell in a Javanese village every time the family clinic gets an acceptor and beating a drum at sunset to remind pill-takers;

- Encouraging children in Bangkok to use condoms as balloons in the hope that their parents will understand the family planning message;

- Running essay contests about population in Taiwanese magazines;

- Giving contraceptives as New Year's presents to Bangkok policemen with "best wishes for subdued fertility"; and

- Putting the family planning message on T-shirts;
The Ernakulam vasectomy program also successfully created the atmosphere of a fair or carnival with balloons, music, and general signs of enjoyment.

A good gimmick can be an invaluable aid to a whole communications program. We might even argue that it is an essential component: the Concise Oxford English Dictionary now defines a **gimmick** as a device "adopted for the purpose of attracting attention or publicity." The only problem with making gimmicks mandatory is that, like a good slogan or a good cartoon, the creative talent necessary to produce them is in short supply. And there are few things worse, or more counterproductive, than a bad gimmick.

It may again be a legacy of the medical control of population programs that good attention-seeking gimmicks are often eschewed or frowned upon as being somehow vulgar or demeaning. I can only note, and stress, that getting attention is a vital function in the communication process. This whole task of attracting, creating, and maintaining interest also offers an excuse for giving my favorite definition of journalism, by Tomalin:

>To say a journalist's job is to record the facts is like saying an architect's job is to lay bricks--true but missing the point. A journalist's real function, at any rate his required talent, is the creation of interest. A good journalist takes a dull, or specialist, or esoteric situation and makes readers want to know about it. By doing so he both sells newspapers and educates people. (All this is not to say that a journalist should ever be inaccurate, or false to the truth as he sees it. He must create interest while being truthful, just as an architect must create pleasing shapes that don't let in the rain.) (Tomalin, 1969.)

The public information officer is, in most part, a journalist and must not forget the creative mainspring of his work. Regrettably, the creative impulses in population communications are often buried under the jargon of the bureaucrat and the academic.

As a not-so-light diversion we might even ask why *Playboy* magazine has never been included in the literature of population communications. Surely it deserves to be; it has done all that the academics ask of a print medium in promoting awareness of contraception, motivating acceptors, even legitimating practices.
CHAPTER 4
Social Marketing: Using Advertising Techniques to Support Population/Family Planning Programs

The problems in the population/family planning "industry" are rarely at the production end: we seldom hear of programs failing because insufficient condoms, pills, or IUDs are produced. The big problems are at the distribution and selling end: not enough people know about and want contraceptives.

It is surprising therefore that the marketing aspects of family planning programs have been examined only in recent years. For, despite whatever success the voluntary/public sector programs have achieved, it is still likely that more people in the world receive their regular contraceptive supplies through commercial channels than through the voluntary/official channels.

This situation is even more surprising in the area of population/family planning communication, where it could have been expected that the communicators would already have known about the power of advertising communications. Basically this is not so, at least until the last decade. The programs which have used advertising techniques as part of their communications are still in the minority.

Partly, the answer lies in the stereotyped views of both population and advertising people, but especially the population people. The medical/middle class/voluntary origins of most family planning programs did not easily allow the use of advertising. Advertising was used in the "sordid" world of commerce, not in the idealistic world of family planning. Advertising was used to "maximize profit" not to promote social and medical well-being.

The advertisers have easy answers to this: their sales figures compare well with any similar figures for noncommercial distribution of contraceptives (even when they were given away).
And it is the advertisers rather than the population people who point out that the techniques of advertising are not the sole preserve of private sector commercial enterprise.

"For some years," says Manoff, "I have been making the plea that this technique (advertising) is not exclusively the property of the marketer of goods and services. It is also available to those who are marketing ideas. Much of what is needed to be established, to be learned, can be done through this technique in any country of the world."

But Manoff is one of the minority of advertising people who have looked at population in this way. Because they are so locked in to private commercial enterprises the advertising professionals often cannot widen their horizons to see how they could help elsewhere.

The general problem is well summarized by two marketing professors, John U. Farley and Harold J. Leavitt:

Any realistic discussion of a marketing role in population programs must recognize that marketers, marketing thinking, and marketing technology are not universally welcomed into the field, nor do marketers themselves necessarily feel comfortable in population planning. Despite the fact that many countries' low birthrates have derived from non-medical activities and non-public programs, population problems are nevertheless viewed as basically medical, and alternative views may not be received enthusiastically. Similarly the prevailing view of what constitutes good research in the field derives again from medical public health and demographic thinking. The rather eclectic and pragmatic definitions of research held by marketers may be seen as sloppy and inadequate, thereby emasculating these activities despite their high potential. Moreover family planning program administrators, governmental or volunteer, often hold at best an apathetic view of business practices in general, and marketing and advertising in particular. This view particularly prevails in those countries where the marketing structure lies entirely in the private sector. For there the profit motive
prevails, and the profit motive is likely to be tacitly suspect in the eyes of public sector people. But control activities are held to be a public service which implies that one must scrupulously make sure that those involved recover no more than the cost of the effort, lest they be charged with 'profiting from misery'. On the other side, of course, marketers who venture into this field must be extremely sensitive to the context of the problem and to the nature of the institutions with which they will be cooperating. Our view is that reasonable men aware of these issues can devise means to avoid these problems early in program development (Farley and Leavitt, 1972, pp. 11-12).

Perhaps it is also the very fact that family planning programs have grown that has caused the greater input of marketing expertise. In the early days of any family planning program, acceptors come easily; the program is preaching to the converted. It is at the next stage—after the first rush of motivated acceptors is secured—that the real communications problems occur.

In the last decade, many of the programs around the world have reached this plateau of acceptors, even though there may be less than 10 percent of the eligible population registered as acceptors. The problem is to expand the market for contraceptives—a problem which the marketers are well equipped to tackle.

Thus, the logical application of marketing principles to the problems of family planning and population programs has become known as "social marketing."

In 1952, G.D. Wiebe asked: "Why can't you sell brotherhood like you sell soap?" He found that in many ways you could; the more the conditions of the social campaign resembled those of a product campaign the more successful the social campaign. But he also noted that, as many social campaigns were conducted under un-marktlike conditions, there were clear limitations to the practice of social marketing.14

Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman basically agree with Wiebe but point to others who think that there are almost no limitations to
social marketing. They also point to the importance of getting the right "mix," something which has become almost a catch phrase among population communicators recently:

Social advertising has become such a feature in American society that it is no longer a question of whether to use it, but how to use it. It has been very successful in some cases and extremely unsuccessful in others. At fault to a large extent is the tendency of social campaigners to assign advertising the primary, if not the exclusive role in accomplishing their social objectives. This ignores the marketing truism that a given marketing objective requires the co-ordination of the promotional mix with the goods and services mix and with the distribution mix. Social marketing is a much larger idea than social advertising and even social communication (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971, p. 5).

Kotler and Zaltman then define social marketing as "the design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research." Marketing mechanisms are bridging devices between the simple possession of knowledge and the socially beneficial use of that knowledge.

This paper only deals with the communication and research aspects of social marketing but it is important to see them against this wider definition.

The basic elements of advertising have been simply described by Manoff. They are: 1) a message which consists of the essence of an idea and reduces it to minimum length but preserves maximum comprehension of its content; 2) delivery to highly concentrated audiences of selected population groups; 3) frequency of exposure so that it can be ingrained in the memory in unchanging form; and 4) the continuity of exposure over long periods of time.

Advertising's effectiveness depends on these elements. Brevity, reach, and frequency are the keys. In the population field, these lessons are just being learned. In some of the programs
which have used advertising techniques the effectiveness has been lessened by ignoring, or being unable to control, these key points. Messages have often been overloaded with information: population is a difficult subject to reduce to a short snappy phrase. Good messages have often not got the "reach" to the correct audience and not the frequency either--perhaps because of wrong media selection, poor knowledge of audience, lack of resources to buy prime time, or insufficient exposure.

But the use of advertising is definitely growing--and radio is by far the most important medium.

By 1973 it was estimated that at least 27 countries were using some form of commercial resources in their programs and at least 16 were buying media space or time. Sweeney describes how some of these countries were using advertising and marketing:

Some countries--El Salvador, Ghana, Jamaica--use the mass media extensively. Newspaper space, radio and television time, billboards, space on buses, cinema space are all bought and paid for. Some countries use the mass media selectively; in 1973 Nicaragua will conduct a year-long national campaign on radio.

In the United States, time and space are donated by the media to the family planning campaign. The prestigious, non-profit Advertising Council has designated family planning a priority. This encourages media contributions. El Salvador, now in the fourth year of its extensive, three-months a year multi-mass-media campaign, has a very suitable mix of paid and free media (Sweeney, 1973 (a), p. 8).

We should note in passing a possible catch with donated time or space, whether from private or public sector media; often the donation is the cheapest slot available, which can mean missing most of the prime or intended audience.

Sweeney also notes the increasing use of commercial advertising agencies:

Costa Rica creates its own program materials and
uses an advertising agency to buy the media and to distribute the required materials. Nicaragua uses an agency for media scheduling of a national radio campaign as well as production of the spots. The initial message content was developed by the Nicaraguan family planning organization; the advertising agency then produced commercially suitable material.

El Salvador, Ghana, Britain, Jamaica, Nigeria and the United States use a full range of advertising agency services. Basic concepts are developed. The material is prepared for media use. Campaign materials are produced for magazines, newspapers, radio, television and other media (op. cit., p. 9).

A brief description of two of these programs, Jamaica and Ghana, demonstrates the possibilities and the pitfalls of using advertising in population communication programs.

JAMAICA

In 1969, the National Family Planning Board (NFPB) hired the McCann-Erickson ad agency to prepare a one-year campaign with a budget of US$60,000. The NFPB briefly detailed the main problems to be overcome by the campaign: ignorance about family planning, unfavorable male attitudes, superstitions, fears of genocide, etc. The agency came back to suggest the use of an overall slogan, a strong Jamaican flavor to the campaign and a highly graphic approach, stressing beneficial effects of family planning rather than trying to counter the believed detrimental ones.

The campaign used radio spots, press ads, TV and cinema slides, giant billboards, transport placards, and posters, all of which carried the slogan: "Plan your family, better your life!" Radio commercials aimed at younger rural women ran for 15 to 45 seconds and were scheduled at peak hours. Press ads used striking headlines: "Girls, you don't have to get pregnant!" and "Can you afford to make her pregnant?". The ads were generally regarded as being of a high standard.

But no one had built in an independent evaluation of the campaign, other than that done routinely by the agency. Program
officers were pleasantly surprised that resentment to the campaign was not as great as they had imagined. But any real evaluation of the campaign was additionally hindered by the launching coinciding with the withdrawal of home visits by fieldworkers. Did the ads have a negative effect on acceptors? Or was it because of the changes with fieldworkers? Or had the ads lessened the impact of stopping home visits?

Negotiations continued for several months about an evaluation. Two local market research companies did preliminary work but eventually it became too late for any realistic evaluation exercise. The observations of the program officers were that awareness had improved considerably but motivation toward going to the clinics was debatable, and that "a proper and thorough evaluation also is of the essence in developing new mass media programs."

Thus the experiment had proved the need to experiment. I cannot resist reference to the wit who said the prime purpose of research was to suggest further research.

GHANA

The experiment here was more "social marketing" in its full sense; the campaign aimed to develop commercial distribution of non-prescription contraceptives. The Ghana National Trading Corporation looked after physical distribution. The National Family Planning program (NFPP) hired the Lintas agency for the advertising side and undertook the research and evaluation exercise with private research organizations and the demographic unit of the University of Ghana Sociology Department.

The advertising campaign involved heavy use of the red triangle symbol and had three main sections: awareness, motivation, and product advertising. Press and radio were the main media used.

Ghana was the first West African country to adopt a population policy and the NFPP had been set up in May 1970. Its public information activities had been limited by lack of staff to press briefings, a few materials addressed to the elite, and some posters and stickers. The marketing campaign was to be the main thrust of an enlarged information program. A Family Planning Week in
May 1971 went well, and the product advertising part of the campaign began on July 15. Because of the constraints, the product campaign began before the motivation campaign, with the awareness campaign being used to bridge the gap. But within a week of July 15 the NFPP Secretariat had suspended all radio, cinema, and TV ads (the cinema and TV ads, in fact, were never shown) and had restricted the press ads because of a few complaints about the contraceptive ads from a few prominent individuals, some of whom had supported the NFPP but thought that advertising contraceptives was "going too far." At about the same time the advertising agency lost its license to operate for six months—when their presence was most required. The point-of-sale advertising, however, continued virtually unhindered.

The immediate results were that visits to clinics and sales of contraceptives increased considerably despite the truncated campaign. Many program people consoled themselves with the fact that the heated discussion caused by the campaign eventually had a desensitizing effect which was beneficial.

The campaign demonstrates two major problems in using "commercial resources." Briefly, they are:

1. Commercial resources like advertising agencies must be allowed proper time to do their job. The whole campaign had been rushed, especially the pretesting of the materials which eventually caused the suspension.

2. Better research, not only at the pretesting stage, would have greatly improved the campaign's efficiency. Academic research is not the same as professional market research, especially when you need results quickly. (This subject will be discussed further in Chapter 5.)

It is also difficult to understand the planning strategy which allowed the product advertising stage of the campaign to precede the "softening up" stages of awareness and motivation advertising. The people who "killed off" the campaign were exactly the people who should have been the targets of the awareness ads.

Despite the setbacks of the campaign, the Ghana program is still gathering force. Most of the people involved have learned some
invaluable lessons. And the Ghanaian experience demonstrates just how new the whole field is for everyone involved in population communications. With the exception of a few rather restricted campaigns in the United States (where the general marketing climate is untypical of the rest of the world), there is still no "model" campaign for reference.

A more cautionary example is that of the Kinga condom campaign in Kenya. An aggressive marketing campaign quickly aroused hostility in several sections of the population and the campaign was cancelled as a result of these protests. The campaign seems to have underestimated the cultural resistance to aggressive marketing. The results of the marketing exercise were bad not only in the short term for the family planning program but also in the longer term for the whole population movement: a body of bad experiences is now an extra barrier to be overcome for the next several years.

The general experience, however, is that some initial setbacks do not justify abandoning further uses of marketing skills in population programs. In fact, probably the reverse is what is needed: a greater exposure to the professionalism of advertising and a considerable improvement in the general effectiveness of population communications by market research agencies.

Quite apart from media advertising of contraceptives, there are several other areas where marketing skills can be valuable.

Philip Harvey, director of Population Services International, an organization devoted to applying marketing skills to population problems, points out that in many countries, advertising of contraceptives is not allowed. Such restrictions are no preserve of developing countries: the United States has only recently relaxed laws on advertising contraceptives and Britain still does not permit television advertising of contraceptives. Thus, the large distributions of contraceptives by private sector organizations have, very generally, been achieved without the massive media advertising support of other mass consumption goods. What the private marketers have done, however, is to apply their skills in other areas: the nature of the product itself, packaging, availability, and general marketing and promotion.

The development of oral contraceptives, for instance, has
been primarily the result of private sector commercial enterprises, who have also undertaken the massive fieldtesting of the product. With condoms, the Japanese especially, have been innovative and creative in developing a range of products for the marketplace. The packaging of these contraceptives has also received great attention: the use of placebos so that women become used to taking a pill daily, the 28-day cycle package itself, and the colored condoms in a variety of packages. These same manufacturers have also developed distribution chains for the products, though, naturally, the distribution is best in the more concentrated market areas than in the rural areas.

In the promotion area, several novel approaches have been adopted but a possible side effect should also be noted, that is, that "public sector/national family planning programs" are a form of loss leader to the private sector in many countries. Once acceptors have been secured, they will look for contraceptive supplies in private or public sector distribution outlets.

The definitive example of what commercial marketing can do for population is still the Indian experience with Nirodh condoms in the 1960's. While giving an excellent summary of the Nirodh experiment, Rogers describes the Nirodh program as "a novel hybrid in family planning structures; in that it only had one government employee involved. The remainder of the program was effected by the staffs of six large trading houses and their associated advertising and research firms. The experiment, well-documented elsewhere, exemplifies good use of research, planning, and basic common sense. Consumer purchases of Nirodh condoms increased by 300 percent within nine months of the program at which time the brand had captured 65 percent of the market. Rogers lists six main advantages of the campaign:

1. The Government of India saved years and a substantial investment by being able to use the vast sales and distribution apparatus of the six companies;

2. The program was relatively cost effective;

3. Expertise in marketing, advertising, and research was obtained from competent business sources;

4. The selling points were easily accessible and acceptable;
5. Good channels of feed-forward and feedback information made for flexible policy making; and

6. The feedback information made for good control—a tribute to the research.

By 1974, 116 million pieces were being sold annually, a seven-fold increase since the 1968 launch. A similar experiment with Preethi condoms was launched in Sri Lanka in 1973 with equally encouraging results.

The Nirodh and Preethi campaigns suggest most strongly that there is a clear and distinct role for commercial resources in population programs; the communication aspect of these resources is especially instructive in that they can (if allowed) impose much higher standards of efficiency and professionalism in population communications, which can only be beneficial. The use of these resources is, however, not a task for the amateur and is not simple. It is difficult to “half-use” commercial resources; either they do all the job or they cannot do it at all.

Selling contraceptives may not be as easy as selling soap, but it can be done. And if present trends continue, these commercial programs will continue to be just as important as those offered by the public sector.
CHAPTER 5

Audiences, Research, Strategies

AUDIENCES

Communicators are becoming weighed down with responsibilities bestowed upon them by nonpracticing theoreticians. One responsibility that the practitioners generally accept of their own accord is to "first know your audience." Messages need receivers as well as senders: there is little point in sending your messages if there is no one there to receive them.

In a clinic the audience is obvious. With the media, you have to look harder. Saunders has suggested a basic list of audiences for population communications:

1. Decision leaders of all types: national, local, religious, political, and otherwise. These are the people who help make policies, legitimate beliefs and behavior, and act as "gatekeepers" to the audiences which listen to them, thanks to the "two-step flow" process of communication.

2. The general public—in whose name almost everybody claims to operate, but who are the ultimate arbiters of acceptance or rejection.

3. Special groups: labor organizations, women's groups, schools, the recently-married, industrial groups; they are all visible in some way—by economic status, pregnancy, the newspaper they read, or the program they listen to—and can thus be identified as targets for family planning messages. It is in this area that the market researchers concentrate in family planning communications: defining and identifying target audiences.

4. Staff personnel—of the family planning program, other
family planning agencies, government departments, planners, all those with an interest in population matters. Communication within population offices is often poor, yet vitally important. And the staffs of these programs are ready-made fieldworkers: consider how many people they talk to at work, at play, in the office, and at home.

5. Relevant professions: medicine, nursing, paramedical staff, pharmacists, social workers, teachers, development workers. Communication is the basis of their professional education, training, and motivation. Donor agencies for population programs should also be included.

6. Educational institutions: both those directly concerned with aspects of family planning and population and those which are general targets for increasing awareness and changing attitudes of future generations. Population education is just beginning to gain a regular place in academic curricula, but the trend is expansionary.

RESEARCH

Securing knowledge of the audiences is the first and most basic research task in population communications. For the most part it does not need outside resources and expertise, just application and common sense by the information staff. Along with audience information, data on the media to be used should be collected. Much useful advice in this area is contained in the module called Using Existing Media (Snyder, et al., 1977).

Before detailing other research tasks we should note some general observations from experts in the field. Wilbur Schramm says:

... most family planning campaigns are 'flying blind,' so far as trustworthy research evidence is concerned. Even pretesting—which is so simple to do and would make so much difference—is seldom used.

Schramm said that despite the growing number of researches, the only family planning program in the developing
regions that has anything like an adequate research and evaluation program is Taiwan's where the Institute of Population Studies, with 45 college graduates and 70 interviewers, is thoroughly integrated into the operational program. The unit has done a number of useful and competent studies, and as a result, Taiwan does know something about how its program is working. This information has played no small part in the steady increase of contraception users from 22 percent in 1965 to 34 in 1967 to 44 at the beginning of 1970. But Taiwan is an exception. Nowhere else is there such a store of reliable information through which the value of family planning can be evaluated (Schramm, 1971 (a), p. 13).

The situation may have improved somewhat in the years since but generally the picture is far from good.

It is no longer necessary to prove that people learn from mass media, says Schramm. But "the evidence is not so clear as to how much the mass media can do by themselves to motivate acceptors. Not many studies have been designed to separate the effect of the public channels from that of personal communication. There is a chronic lack of control groups."

Schramm concluded his 1971 survey of Communication in Family Planning with these remarks about research:

Much field research must be designed for a specific program; but how much research have we that could be translated into more general use? There are a number of things we must know about a research project in order to decide whether it can be applied elsewhere. The circumstances that condition a project—that make it unique or similar to others—often are not reported along with the findings, with the result that readers in another country cannot tell whether the findings apply to their situations as well as to the situation in the country where the research was carried out. Even case studies done in sufficient detail to indicate where and how they may be applicable would be of greater use than most program descriptions published today. Would it not be desirable to attack some key questions jointly—to designate a few questions that are most in need of answering and begin to approach them cross-culturally with carefully designed
research that would make the results useful for more than one country? In family planning as in many other fields of social studies it is easier to ask than to answer questions about communications (Schramm, 1971 (b), p. 40).

Schramm is not alone in this dismal view of research. Rogers, who spent several years in India, says:

The volume of family planning communications researches is huge, and the number is growing rapidly. One implication of this large volume is that family planning program officials cannot cope with the "information overload" of empirical facts yielded by these studies... A review by Agarwala (1962) listed 26 such (KAP) Indian studies; six years later there were 241 KAP studies completed in India and about 400 or 500 in some 72 nations. (Mauldin and others, 1971). How can any family planning program official be expected to read 241 KAP publications. Or five hundred? (Rogers, 1973, p. 377)

Rogers notes other problems too: a strong U. S. influence in research, lack of contact between researchers and program officials, little comparability across researches, poor potential for utilization, and so on. "The intellectual contribution of family planning communication research to scientific understanding of human behaviour change has been dismal," concludes Rogers. "Huge resources were and are being invested in this research but the theoretical payoff has been slim" (op. cit., p. 378).

The problems for the communicator are quickly apparent: if the so-called "experts" do not know what is happening, just where do you go for reliable sources for your information messages?

The program administrator is often similarly put on the spot by the state of research. A.A. Armar, Director of the National Family Planning Programme in Ghana, speaks from experience:

... there is need for constant dialogue between the programme administrator and researchers in various fields of study that are of relevance to family planning if research undertakings are to be geared to programme needs. Although such a dialogue is obviously desirable there are
there are things that may make it difficult. A problem that immediately comes to mind stems from the difference between the administrator's and the researcher's approaches to research undertakings. While the Programme Administrator is bound to interest himself in the utilitarian aspects of research results the Research Worker by training and inclination is more likely to see his research undertaking as an exercise in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. These two approaches need not be mutually exclusive. However, the need for the family planning administrator to base sound administrative decisions on factual information which can be provided by the Social Scientist means that the Social Scientist should be persuaded to relate his research activities to the needs of the action programme. This is particularly so in the developing countries where we can ill afford the luxury of pure research projects that have no practical application to a country's problems (1971, pp. 2-3).

So what are the key research areas for the population communicator? Three areas immediately suggest themselves.

1. **Pretesting of Messages:** Robert McLaughlin put the problem well: "For most people involved in the design or production of communication materials, the idea of pretesting comes as nothing short of a professional insult." 15 This situation is undoubtedly true in many information offices. It arises from the journalistic, rather than advertising backgrounds of most information officers. Journalists do not usually pretest their messages, but neither do they need to; their messages are usually sent only once and any feedback information can easily be incorporated into succeeding messages. With advertising messages—like family planning slogans or radio spots—the message is transmitted numerous times and it is difficult and expensive to change the form of that message, hence the need for pretesting.

Population communications literature is littered with cases where pretesting would have greatly improved the efficiency of the communications. The important point is to test messages on the real audience, rather than a group of colleagues in the office. The actual testing exercise can be done by the information staff although, as it is essentially a tool of marketing, a market research agency would be the better choice if resources permit.
2. Monitoring: Any rational communications program will want to know how well it is achieving its objectives. There is no substitute for research in order to establish the baseline or starting point and then to monitor the effects of the campaign at frequent intervals. Much of this information will have two main uses— for "feedback" and "feed-forward." Feedback is the response by the audience to the messages you have sent and indicates how future messages should be modified. Feed-forward information is information gathered about receivers before sending messages, that is, knowing your audience.

Most of the research to date in this area has been as part of the overall evaluation of population programs, the chief instrument of which has been the KAP surveys of the social scientists. As we have already seen, KAP studies have their problems although the most recent varieties are being greatly improved. It is likely, however, that in the future, the communications component of population programs will use the more specific techniques of market research more than the more general techniques of social science research.

3. Market Research: This heading allows us to examine the "how" and "when" of using market research techniques and agencies. Armar recognized the importance of general social science research but also, as a program administrator, he recognized the need for "information that is required on an immediate or short-term basis (which) perhaps best fits into the classification of 'market research.' This is the area most neglected to date. Unfortunately the design and conduct of quick 'impressionistic' sample surveys is not often attractive to the university based social scientist. Yet this type of study can provide the administrator with very useful information on which to base management decisions" (1971, p. 6).

This need for quick information is especially important for the population communicator: a clinic open at the wrong hours loses a few acceptors but a series of ads running at the wrong time can miss the whole target population and quickly exhaust the media budget. Bogue has listed five ways in which communications can fail:

1. They can miss the mark—by not attracting attention,
not being understood, or not provoking the response intended.

2. They may be redundant--by trying to do something done already, for example, motivation toward family planning.

3. They can be mismanaged--by insufficient repetition over time, lack of reinforcement from other media, or bad timing.

4. They can overkill--by grinding on long after the goal has been achieved.

5. They can boomerang--by producing negative attitudes and actions among the audience.16

In "Rapid Feedback for Family Planning Improvement," Bogue's solution is essentially the same as Armar's. The word "improvement" is important for that is the main aim of applied research. Bogue also stresses the need for "Rapid Feedback for Family Planning Improvement" at three levels in population communications--programs, campaigns, and operations. Market research agencies can be employed to examine all these problem areas.

Robert Smith says that "marketing research, and survey research specifically, has very real value for determining the kinds of messages and kinds of appeals that will work with certain segments of the audience, and it allows you to do market segmentation."17 His paper also gives good advice on selecting a market research company, requesting a proposal, designing a questionnaire, pre-testing it, checking the work, and using the results.

Undoubtedly there are good and bad market research firms and in developing countries the choice is often restricted. But bad research is usually bad business in the longer term and standards appear to be improving. In Southeast Asia, for instance, there are several examples of market research firms being hired for essentially academic researches. Until very recently, very few academics were sufficiently convinced of commercial researchers' competence to have hired them for their own research. The Survey Research Group, based in Kuala Lumpur, has been one of the leaders in the Southeast Asian region of the general improvement in the competence of commercial research organizations.
CAMPAIGNS, STRATEGIES, PLANNING

Discussion of research leads logically to the problems of management and planning of communications; both tasks requiring reliable and sufficient flows of information. In population programs, the management and planning systems for communications are still in an embryonic stage. Bogue describes a philosophy which has typified too many programs: "we are in the midst of a terrible crisis. The need for action is urgent. Almost anything we can do will help. Therefore let us plan a program as best we can and then get on with the action." Actions count more than plans, rightly, but plans can greatly improve actions. Bogue says that many of these quickly planned programs are "frozen" as the communications segment of the overall program, with no provision for learning from mistakes or stopping inadequate communication exercises.

We can quickly see three major areas or levels for management and planning concern: 1) strategies; 2) campaigns; and 3) operations.

Strategies

By this is meant "a plan for marshalling communication resources to accomplish a specified change in human communication" (Rogers, 1973, p. 29).

UNESCO has become heavily involved with this area, pointing out that population communication should be seen as part of the whole field of development communication. A 1972 meeting of experts reported that:

A systematic approach to the use of communication media should be adopted wherever feasible. Strategies need to reconcile the availability, potential and popularity of particular media, programmes already in operation, the availability of resources for development communication in terms of finance and personnel. They should make maximum use of existing communication infrastructures and in some countries, where large geographical areas have to be covered, particular attention should be paid to the establishment of localised programmes, demanding an element of decentralised media planning. . . . It is vital that media strategies should be realistic, taking account of the ability
of particular regions to deliver family planning and development services, concentrating attention on areas where follow-up is immediately possible (UNESCO, 1973, annex 1, p. 1).

As a statement of intent this is fine but the problems in the field make their own statements. Another UNESCO meeting, in 1973, made for depressing reading about the state of research into both the software and hardware aspects of family planning communication:

--From 1959 to 1970 there have been over 120 research projects on family planning communication but less than four have been used to guide national programs (UNESCO, 1972, p. 7).

It is beyond the scope of this paper--and this writer!--to offer a synthesis of population communication strategies. The field is also very new. But Sweeney suggests seven basic questions worth asking:

1. What is the present situation?
2. What are the concrete and short-range future plans?
3. What needs to be done?
4. Based on identified needs and from a practical point of view, what can be accomplished in the immediate future?
5. Based on identified needs, what should be done but will require policy or other major decisions?
6. Which agencies are doing which tasks? Who will do new tasks? What new agencies can be involved?
7. Assuming no coordinating mechanisms, how can the work of the various groups be integrated? Does the practical situation dictate a loose organization or can a better, more tightly integrated mechanism be established, particularly for planning? (1973 (b), p. 104).

Campaigns

By which is meant a pre-planned set of communication activities designed by change agents to achieve certain changes in receiver behaviour in a specific time period.
Thus, one "strategy" will include several "campaigns." The techniques of advertising, public relations, and market research offer the most and best expertise, and there is no need to detail methods of campaign management here. Again Sweeney offers a convenient check-list for the "do-it-yourself" planner: Needs, Objectives, Strategy (that is, knowing how this part fits in to the whole), Work Plan, Action, and Evaluation.

Operations

That is, who will do the work, where, when? How much will have to be contracted out of the population information office?

At the campaign and operations levels one of the major problems is deciding "the media mix" (among the media) or the "communications mix" (between mass and interpersonal communication). UNESCO says, rightly, that multi-media and multi-communication mixes are the more effective but "there is, however, very little research in the multi-media approaches in family planning. Most decisions on media mixes have been made on the basis of guesswork and intuition." The advantages offered by advertising and marketing techniques are obvious.

Andreas Fuglesang also makes a good point when answering the question "which media is best?"

... not a very professional question. ... the media situation in most developing countries is such that the problem is never the making of the right choice between a number of media ... the problem is to utilise in the best possible way the media which are there" (1973, p. 117).

This remark also has a wider relevance; each program must be planned according to local conditions. And, of course, we must recognize that needs change as the program develops. An ECAFE Working Group in 1967 defined three phases of development in information programs:

1. When voluntary agencies are solely responsible for conducting family planning with no official recognition or government support of the policy;

2. When family planning comes to be recognized tacitly but
still lacks official policy support; and

3. When family planning becomes an official government policy.

The information program is not, of course, a linear sequence of tasks but a range of activities--many of which must take place concurrently and many of which change in importance during the life of the program. The need for management is just as important with information as with any other part of the program--and this should be reflected in the budget. The following outlines some of the main activities and how the emphasis on them can change:

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<tr>
<th>Percentage of Budget Allotted During</th>
<th>Main Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>First Budget Year</td>
<td>Fifth Budget Year</td>
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We should also note the importance of governments declaring a policy on population, both as something to plan for, and then to plan around. There is little doubt that government policy statements
are an enormous boost to population programs, especially for the communications program. The subject becomes legitimized and in many countries, government support quickly means access to government-controlled media.

There are two other major problems which should be considered under this management rubric: the absence of any significant cost-benefit analyses in population communications and the resources allocated to communications within the population program.

In 1971 Schramm considered that "we have come to the point where we no longer have any excuse whatsoever not to put a major emphasis on studying cost-effectiveness rather than merely effectiveness. It is surprising how little we know about the relative costs of getting an adopter to the clinic by different methods or what it costs to keep him in the program a year. We need to know at what size a field staff ceases to be cost-effective, and at what stage in the development of family planning it is cost-effective to use direct mail. What would be the effect of doubling the allocation to clinics compared to the effect of doubling information budgets? What happens to unit costs when television is added to radio?—we can estimate the total cost but what about the cost per adopter? . . . what is the unit cost of ordinary information methods? Without the answers to questions like these we are playing blind man's buff" (Schramm, 1971 (c), p. 11-12).

The position has not changed greatly since 1971 and, unfortunately, this paper can only emphasize the problem rather than offer help. By far, the best advice this paper can offer is to suggest compulsory reading of Finnegan's 1971 paper on ideas about stretching the media budget in family planning. In the available literature it is virtually unique and makes the vital point that while the communicator's budget is always limited, his imagination should never be. 20

There can be little doubt that a great deal of time and money has been wasted in population communications and that even the most rudimentary cost-benefit tools would have saved much of this waste. Poor use of resources is no asset when trying to secure more resources within the population program, especially when the communications segment is usually playing second fiddle to the services segment.
Saunders describes the problem simply and well:

In communications as in other activities results are usually proportional to input. A small effort gets a small payoff; a large effort of equal quality should get proportionately more. Businesses that do not advertise tend to remain the same size or go out of business. Many that do advertise tend to prosper and grow. Family planning is not a business although the manufacture and sale of contraceptives is, but family planning has an idea as well as some products to sell. How well the ideas and products move depends on how well they are known; and that in turn, depends on how well they are promoted through communication channels.

Most family planning programs--national and private alike--tend to allocate only a small proportion of their budget to communications. Recently, I proposed 20 to 25 percent of the total family planning budget as a reasonable amount for communications. Many feel that this is too much: the consensus seemed to be that 5 percent was a more likely figure (1971, p. 24).

Saunders describes how India spent about 5 percent on communications, Pakistan about 2 percent, Iran about 70 percent on communications and training, and Ghana about 35 percent. He also points to his own employers, the Ford Foundation, who spent about 25 times as much on reproductive biology research as on communications support. Saunders sees the medical influence as the main cause of low communications budgets and a preference for personal communications rather than mass media techniques, with which medical people are "not comfortable."

There is probably no correct proportion of the budget that should be expended in every country on communications for family planning. Each country will want to work out its own allocation. But there is a noticeable tendency to underestimate both the importance and the costs of communications, which probably indicates that those responsible for communications programs should be more aggressive in presenting and documenting their claims for support (op. cit., p. 25).

Hurrah for that. You get what you pay for. And managements often do not see the paradox of using communications: the
best communications materials look simple but achieving that simplicity is a highly-skilled operation—which does not come cheap.

This problem in management is probably emphasized further in population programs being, usually, public sector enterprises with or without grant support. A separate treatise could be written on the differences between "fundability" and "profitability." (The cynic would see the biggest difference as efficiency.)

There is also the example of Taiwan which is generally considered to be one of the best-managed population programs. Taiwan has a control and information system much closer to that of a private sector marketing organization than to a public sector bureaucracy.

Rogers makes a good point when he says that business executives are demand oriented, regarding the determinants of consumer demand as manipulable, but government family planning officials are supply oriented, perceiving their strategies to be limited to making contraceptive services more accessible. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the communication of many government population programs, wherein materials designed for print are sent to television stations, films "go-over" audiences' heads, basic demographic knowledge of the local media situation is poor, and so on.

It may well be that marketing organizations have not only their "products" to offer to population programs but also their management and control systems.
CHAPTER 6
A Few Areas for Improvement

This paper could have begun with this chapter. Samples of materials used in population communications programs around the world could have been collected and critiqued and the other chapter heads would have followed. But a simple glance at the materials would help very little. Yesterday's materials are not today's problem, just a symptom of it. Awarding brownie points to a few materials and demerits to many more might be fun but it would not greatly help the production of materials in the future. William Caxton was a printer, but he could not produce today's New York Times.

Within the public information segment of population communications, there are enough inhibitions already: low budgets, few staff members, lack of knowledge (including training), and so on. Worse still, even the boss may be more turned on to interpersonal communication, at the expense of public information, and disregard the fact that one bad press release can offend a much greater audience than a platoon of fieldworkers. (This is not to deny the importance of fieldworkers but to emphasize inhibitions facing public information personnel.) Also, most important, the output of public information is judged by standards prevailing outside the program office rather than within the organization. There are many incentives to inactivity.

So, rather than focus on what has gone wrong, this chapter identifies a few areas where public information programs could perhaps be improved.

SECURE A PROPER PLACE FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public information is more than a few handouts, half a dozen radio spots, and occasional help with film production. This must be
recognized by the program directors and their budgets. And it must be recognized by the information officers who use "contact building" as an excuse to get out of the office. Good planning will help. Public information and the whole communications sector needs to come of age in population programs; if it behaves like a baby it will continue to be treated as one. Saunders says that "family planning communications, especially in the mass media, should be an activity with its own area of responsibility that it pursues relatively independently of the service branch." With a few honorable exceptions this is still not the case. Communications departments have not earned that responsibility. They are low down the population and communication totem poles. The general solution to these problems is, undoubtedly increased professionalism.

MORE PROFESSIONALISM

Saunders states: "Communications is a professional function, and it ought to be performed by persons trained and experienced in one or another branch of the field. No one would think of having untrained persons perform the medical functions of family planning . . ." (1971, p. 26). For fieldworker training, he advocates the professionalism of the sales manager.

On the mass media side, experienced professionals are exceedingly rare in family planning. We have not yet begun to tap the enormous amount of knowledge and creative talent that is available in advertising agencies, film studios, radio and TV stations and journalism . . . .

To do this job properly and rapidly we need to mobilize and use the talents of the most creative, imaginative, energetic, and experienced communications professionals we can find (1971, pp. 26-27).

I can feel the inhabitants of hard-pressed, short-staffed information offices switching off at these remarks. But it can be done done--by the information staff and/or with the help of others.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

There is not a mountain of good instructional material
available for improving communication skills in population programs. But there is enough. Idleness, the prevailing ethic, is a greater problem than lack of training materials. From personal experience these few titles are recommended:

- Stretching the Media Budget--Ideas from East Asia, by O. D. Finnigan.

- How to Improve Written Communication for Birth Control, by Donald J. Bogue and Veronica S. Heiskanen (Chicago Community and Family Study Center).

- A Blueprint for Production for Media for Population Communication, by Bjorn Berndtson (University of Chicago Communication Laboratory).

- The Planning, Preparation and Production of Audiovisual Materials, by Björn Berndston (University of Chicago).

- Using Media for Family Planning, of the Modular Professional Development series, by Mary-jane Snyder, Margaret White, Jane Clark, with Merry Lee San Luis. (East-West Communication Institute.)

The list is far from comprehensive but it has the rare distinction of being written by academics yet containing good practical advice.

LOOK FOR HELP

It must be a rare information officer who is isolated from a newspaper office, radio station, advertising agency, or market research firm. The best plan is always to pay your way but even in their efforts to sell their services, these media and marketing professionals can offer great assistance to the hard-pressed information officer. (Such contact might even persuade the information officers that they are not the only ones hard-pressed.) As we have already seen, the trend in population communications is toward greater use of marketing skills. These skills are present in all but the very least developed countries. No import license is needed, and it is usually cheaper to use these resources.
Do not publish a separate newspaper if there are others which can deliver your message for a fraction of the cost. Sponsorship is a great stretcher of funds. The important point is that "materials must be professional if they are to compete in the market place . . . . Why buy a cow when you can buy milk in the store?" 22

These general exhortations can lead to the improvement of the more specific communications skills.

Improve the Messages

Perhaps one of the most valid criticisms of most materials produced so far in population communications is that they were produced as part of "crash" programs--with insufficient attention being paid to planning, preparation, and testing. Thus many messages have missed the mark. The skills of marketing are especially important here and much useful advice is given by Manoff and Smith about designing the message and using market research. 23

Improve the Media Mix

Information officers do not just happen, they usually come from one of the mass media and bring their media preferences with them. The techniques of advertising offer a certain salvation and there is no doubt that the multi-media approach has a much better chance of success that the single-media one. Information officers need to develop the skill of reaching all the media and "recycling" as much of their material as possible. Newspaper people can be invited to see your film. A radio script might make a strip cartoon. It may often be a better use of resources to make the media themselves the first target audience.

Improve Basic Reporting of Communications Projects in Population Programs

Schramm has pointed to the lack of continuity and comparability in many population communications projects. I can only endorse those remarks. Although there is an ever increasing quantity of information in the field, I have a sinister suspicion that the quality of much of this information is poor: basic descriptions of projects are often missing and reporting of projects is usually irregular. It will be a sad waste of the new information technology if...
we stuff our computerized information resource collections with rubbish. This author produces academic papers only occasionally. I must confess to having had much greater difficulty collecting raw information for this paper than for its predecessor. Many of the entries on my computerized printout were little more than statements of "what we are trying to do" rather than "what we have done." Surely it is not impossible for all projects to be reported in greater detail and more regularly. It would be a great help.

Similarly, those who operate information collection and storage resources should not forget, or should be reminded of, the need for a qualitative assessment of the information they collect. The technical capacities for storing information are not matched by our individual capacities to absorb that information, speed reading notwithstanding. We must remember that the people who can best use much of the information we collect do not necessarily have as much time as we do. Editing is a duty, as well as a skill.

This chapter is purposefully brief; academic papers do not make good vocational teachers. But, hopefully, the point is made that training is often a matter of will--and communication is essentially a matter of creativity. Oscar Wilde is credited with the remark that "we should never forget that the things most worth learning can never be taught." Kindling the creative spark is never easy. In population communications this is particularly so--thanks to bureaucratic structures, the medical tradition, the taboos involved, the influence of academia, and a host of other factors. But creativity can be found--in the Ernakulam vasectomy campaigns, on the backs of Taiwanese matchboxes, on the streets of Bangkok with the community-based distribution of condoms, in Madison Avenue ads, and thousands of other places.

Population is, after all, the ultimate creative business.
NOTES


2. Personal conversation with the author.

3. This definition is taken from Sweeney, "Population and Family Planning" (see References).

4. From Sweeney, "Using Commercial Resources" (see References).

5. For a fuller explanation see Sweeney, "Population and Family Planning" (see References).


7. See Saunders, 1967 for a brief, useful overview of family planning communication in development.


11. One of the few examples of good practical advice in the population communication literature is O. D. Finnigan, "Stretching the Media Budget--Ideas from East Asia."

12. For a fuller description of folk media applications in population communication, see the IEC Newsletter, No. 20, 1975. Honolulu: East-West Communication Institute.


14. It is interesting that Wiebe was asking the question as early as 1951 (Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 15, Winter issue). His analysis is examined by Kotler and Zaltman (see References).


18. From UNESCO's Research in Family Planning Communication (see References).


REFERENCES


