DISCUSSION PAPER

Community Participation and UNICEF Programming

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Introduction

UNICEF has declared that in the coming years its policies and plans "indicate a clear priority and increase in the training and human resources development components, with special emphasis on health education/community motivation..." and "Particular emphasis is laid on community participation and the development and involvement of women."*

UNICEF's Executive Board is even more emphatic requiring at its 1982 Session "<u>Mandatory</u> inclusion in the programmes of health education and community motivation supported by project support communications."

Recommendations

The present discussion paper examines community participation matters and leads to the following suggestions:

1. Representatives should be alerted that no UNICEF country programme will be considered complete unless an input is planned (and spelled out in operational terms) which will advance the development of community participation activities as an integral aspect of programmes and projects.

2. The programming document should include a specific budget line for the proposed community participation work.

3. UNICEF should aim to provide a growing resource of personnel to assist country representatives and programme officers in initiating, establishing, detailing and systematically expanding community participation activities (possibly a "coalition" of the advisers in Community Participation, P.S.C., Training, and Primary Health Care).

4. The methods for incorportating community participation as an integral part of the <u>planning</u> process must be given special attention.

5. Subsequent and systematic <u>auditing</u> of community participation as a programme element should be given special attention.

6. Community participation should be fully documented within a manageable monitoring, reporting and evaluation process. The variations and sector specific aspects should be carefully described and prepared for training purposes and for distribution to the knowledge network.

7. The training of community development workers, its special on-the-job problem-solving nature, should receive attention, and UNICEF support be used to encourage the establishment of an on-going cadre of such trainers country-by-country.

8. Projects related to community participation undertaken in collaboration with sister agencies should be more firmly detailed and in scope should clearly draw upon and feed into UNICEF's extensive experience.

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*Basic Strategy Document on Human Resources Development. IDWSSD, April 1982.

Discussion

In July 1980 a UNICEF project officer and engineer reporting the situation in one of our best Water Supply and Sanitation programmes stated the following:

"Almost every project visited had problems of community participation. At present there appears to be no coherent strategy concerning the engagement and management of community participation. It is assumed that because the request is supposed to come from the community, their participation is somehow guaranteed and that it is necessary only to carry out a brief survey and design and then proceed with construction as quickly as possible. The evidence shows that this assumption is false, because usually the request does not genuinely come from the community and because, even if it did, such a request is only the first stage in the difficult process of engaging the participation of the community.

In reality, the engagement and management of community participation is a complex exercise, requiring certain definite procedures and the skills of experienced field staff. There is an urgent need to develop a more rigorous and professional approach to the whole concept of community participation. Such an approach will take time and experience to develop. Much experience has already been gained, but it has not yet been utilised to form a coherent strategy."

"It is likely that the construction of a water supply is the biggest, perhaps the only, joint activity that the village has ever undertaken. The maintenance of community participation through the main phases of survey, construction and maintenance, covering numerous activities spread over a long period, is something that needs careful management. (Glennie, July 1980)

This states the situation very well and the same story can be repeated everywhere in the various projects making up Primary Health Care (Nutrition, Diarrhoea control, Immunization, etc.), in Education and Welfare, and throughout UNICEF's programmes.

Aid as a Development Activity

UNICEF's basic services approach aims to reach the poorest and ultimately looks for impact as the measure of success.

It is characteristic that those most in need and for whom a "package" of inputs is most required to stimulate on-going development are precisely those whose command over resources is minimal and for whom the opportunity and skills for seeking, welcoming, responding to, absorbing, maintaining and institutionalizing change are most lacking. It is precisely those whose expectations and organisational capacity for change are so limited who most need attention in sensitive step-by-step assistance toward effectively participating with external agents and learning to use an opportunity to plan and follow through the mutually agreed attempts to improve their lives.

It is also precisely in those countries where resources are most scarce that one is likely to find a deeply ingrained tradition (whatever the prevailing political ideology) where the control of resources is firmly at the top and there is a world's-apart poorly organised set of relationships down through the social and bureaucratic hierarchy to the bottom.

Bureaucracies operate firmly as production, rather than people-oriented agencies and (as Korton et al suggest) a process of "bureaucratic reorientation" must be part of a community participation process.

It is within these circumstances broadly speaking, that UNICEF (and many aid programmes) operate. Even so, UNICEF has been more effective than most in targeting, making contact with, and channelling its resources to the lower strata through the surface neutrality of its universal appeal for the care of the world's children. But has it been able to firmly institutionalise its undoubted successes for on-going development and service delivery?

"Community Development" and "Community Participation" are terms which span at least a generation of aid thinking and literature. The ideas associated with them, like fashions, tend to wax and wane in the planning declarations, but precise planning of such activity within the planning process and precise work plans, staffing, timing, and (most markedly) budgeting almost without exception remain weak or absent.

Publicly UNICEF has gone much further than join the confused chorus reiterating community this and community that; it has publicly declared, for example, that community participation is

"not a separate programme component but rather both a methodology and a goal ... its vital elements are those of shared decision-making and responsibility, joining in the process of problem identification followed by programme development, implementation and monitoring. It means a shift from poor people and communities serving as objects of attention by development specialists to their being full partners in the development process".

In action, UNICEF has encouraged its staff to involve itself with the efforts of those organisations, public and private, who field personnel at the very grass roots and it is common for UNICEF staff to actively support and maintain close relationships with such personnel. UNICEF's work has often been innovative and exciting and yet, despite its declared intent, its community focus remains fragmentary and insufficiently focused and sustained for impact to match its efforts.

In the course of the present UNICEF/UNDP Consultation to the World Bank Project on low-cost water and sanitation, a number of important matters have clearly emerged and are common to other sectors.

Detailed documentation of what is happening at the field level exists in a very fugitive and fragmentary way at Headquarters. It is also very difficult to identify, locate and retrieve. Specifically, the community development aspects of programme are usually deeply embedded (indeed obscured) in technical documentation. There is as yet no systematic country-by-country, project-by-project, incorporation of community participation activity and no regular process for monitoring or auditing this aspect of the programme and projects which is one of the reasons for the fugitive nature of the documentation.

The highly commendable efforts of the Headquarters advisory staff and much of the work of many excellent field workers seems to go undocumented and undistilled for policy, programme development, and know-how training purposes.

It would ssem that UNICEF's stated policy and intent, which mandates community participation and project support communication in its programmes, is not supported operationally by sufficient institutionalisation, manpower and resources to realise its outstanding potential in establishing community participation as a major demonstrably effective hands-on aspect of UNCEF's input in development, which could provide a breakthrough towards people-oriented methods of social planning and programme implementation.

The Example of Water and Sanitation

Just one brief example: of the 80 country programmes appearing in UNICEF's Water and Sanitation "Digest" (November 1981) 45 provide no community participation information at all, 12 more provide a cryptic phrase or two, which along with 12 of the remaining 23 tells us that the community is providing labour as its primary participation activity. Merely 11 indicate any community role in planning, be it ever so little such as "site selection", and only one sees the community as having a role in evaluation . Of course the "Digest" is not the full picture. Matters have improved since 1981, with Mrs. Ma and Muriel Glasgow reinforcing the Water Section.* However, the Water Programme has long been particularly committed to a very strong community participation approach and yet it too certainly needs the organisational resources to make the intent a reality.

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* See "Applicability before Evaluation and Replication", D. Drucker, UNICEF April 1983.

Evaluation

Presently underway through Mr. E. Lannert, Mr. Randy Wilson et al is an effort to collect and review evaluation and studies of UNICEF programmes.*

It would seem that until now, evaluation of programmes and projects has also not been part of an institutional and regular procedure.

Certainly the methods and approach to evaluation would not satisfy purists or social science academics. However, commendably field personnel do provide evaluation material, usually oriented to an administrative need when consideration is being given to the expansion or continuation of a programme, or to meet the interests of a donor agency, or sometimes because there is an it-would-be-nice-to-know-effort by a number of the field staff. The Water Section evaluation materials deal very largely with technical aspects of water supply and sanitation programmes (pumps, drilling, water systems, etc.) and sometimes are eager to identify highly ambitious matters such as health status impact. Where there is attention to community and health education aspects, there is the state-of-the-art difficulty of determining exactly what is being evaluated.**

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* Abstract of Evaluation Reports, PDPD TIRS 83/06, UNICEF May 1983

** See discussion in Consultation Document: "Community Participation: the nature of training as an integral process in development planning and implementation of Water and Sanitation Programmes". D. Drucker, UNDP/UNICEF 1982.

There are very important issues involved here. Evaluation is a difficult task technically and usually an expensive one in terms of time, personnel and money. Very solid indicators, at least, can be provided by competent field visits and some key managerial monitoring. See for example:

(a) How a set of pictures "......Greater than the hole - some pictorial observations", D. Drucker, UNICEF/Burma, June 1980, must cast real doubt that the health objectives are being met, however successful the technical input may be.

(b) How the field observation that there has been a failure to manufacture and deliver medical kits for Community Health Workers will jeopardise the very foundation of the Primary Health Care programme, "Community Health Worker's Kit Replenishment Workshop", Aslam and Drucker, UNICEF/Burma, May 1980.

(c) "The case for village level planning", D. Drucker, UNICEF/Burma, February 1980 which gives a "what to see and what to make of a field visit, guide". Success and replicability of projects are determined in the developing world by detailed planning and good daily management processes. Little of this 'process' usually surfaces in usable form from our present linear and sampling type reporting and evaluation methods.

Programming: Social Aspects

UNICEF is of course an aid agency and not an academic or research institution, and must concentrate its resources on programme rather than studies. However, some narrative and descriptive process reporting could be established to strengthen the monitoring response and evaluation possibilities.

Funding of projects is very important in giving credibility to activities. But we find funding is not community aspects specific or clearly related in overall UNICEF project budgets.

A specific budget line would give the community participation activity the kind of clout that everyone will understand. Earmarked funds show we mean business and are not expressing just a general philosophy and policy guide. However, specific funding should not lead to community participation seen as a project separate from programme it must be a process; an approach; the context in which UNICEF programmes are mounted. To begin with, perhaps we should think of two percent of the total budget. This has been argued elsewhere as follows:

"Possible Approaches to Community Participation and
Heath Education for Rural Water Supply

Two Percent Solution

One approach to integrating health education* and so-called software into project design and implementation is the "two percent solution." The two percent solution (one should bargain for three percent) is a rough guide to what one should seek for the social aspects of programmes which have a large hardware component. Two percent of the total budget of the programme should be secured as the development costs of the social components. Two percent likewise should be seen as that share of the total manpower given exclusively for these purposes. Also, the two percent should be acknowledged as a firm budget line so that it cannot be switched. Start-up funding might be necessary but in the first fiscal year after such funding two percent should appear in the regular budget to acknowledge such activities and to assure their continuity. Two percent does not include health education materials. It is for programme development only. If and when such materials are to be produced and distributed, provision for them should be made from the regular hardware procurement funds. Two percent is small enough to disarm those who are skeptical of the value of the social aspects in a programme, but it should be enough to be able to demonstrate their potential. Two percent is little enough to assure that production will not be eroded unduly because of the diversion of funds."**

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* Effective Health Education is to be seen as an integral part of community participation activities.

** WASH Field Report No. 30, "Integration of Health Education in CARE's water and sanitation project in Indonesia", D. Drucker 1982.

It is still relatively rare for programme officers and representatives to see clearly quite how the 'community participation' might best fit within the specific circumstances of their country and as an integral part of their proposed familiar and "acceptable" programmes and projects.

The very requirement of programming 'community participation' and justifying the expenditure would provide the opportunity (<u>necessity</u>) for a growing resource of personnel within UNICEF to assist country representatives and programme officers in the detail of initiating, establishing, and planning to systematically expand the required "rigorous and professional approach to the whole concept of community participation".

The resource would have to be built and focus upon a country-by-country, project-by-project basis in such a way as to demonstrate coherently the year-by-year contribution and progress that they and UNICEF were making towards the institutionalisation of community participation processes in planning and in project impact. We envisage here that 'community participation' (as diverse as its operation may be) would become a specific object of programme audit country by country.

Community Participation as a Development Goal and a Development Means

There is a confusing duality about community participation. David Werner has for example formulated 'community supportive' and 'community oppressive' programmes. There is the important operational consideration of each community's differing capacity, experience and latent skill to become involved in something more than hand-to-mouth, privatised, domestic subsistence planning and the limits imposed by whoever really calls the shots in tradition-bound scarce-resource societies. It is the latent capacity, its release, and enrichment which can be considered the <u>social capital-formation</u> dimension of community participation. This is the foundation and infra-structure upon which planning around any specific objective or input has to be based. Without sufficient social capital or foundation we see repeatedly that both social and technical objectives fail and resources are diverted, captured, or wasted. Evidence that sufficient social capital exists or can be generated should be required as an indicator in assessing project feasibility. Community Participation is vitally concerned with this capital accumulation or foundation-laying. Gradually it is becoming recognized as an essential development goal, and not just a means, if development itself is not to remain elusive.*

However in practice, and for an aid agency which is not essentially a community development service, it is not realistic to expect to lay such foundations in the abstract as if the capacity of planning could be successfully built or improved unrelated to the question of planning for <u>what</u> and in what social, cultural, political and economic context.

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* This is a version of the oft-quoted, "Give a man a fish and he will not be hungry for a day. Teach him how to fish and he will not be hungry always."

This is particularly the case at the community level where intellectualized constructs are of limited consequence and social forces are often constricting and much in evidence. What we have called the social capital for change must be accumulated around planning for some specific objective or project. Every plan for technical input, however, can be seen as an 'entry-point' for more fundamental change. One day, communities may be able to identify their own priorities and know what is truly possible, and central planning may then become an aggregation, collating different needs and resources, and become a support-down activity. For the moment, however, the best we can expect is that the priority, programme or project which may have been largely conceived outside of the community, if presented adequately, will meet with sufficient recognition and response from within the community so that they can effectively identify with it and make it sufficiently their own.*

The process of community participation, then, has the duality of working on this now with the intention of providing the basis for working on other things at a later time. Working with communities is the context in which participation will begin to take place. It demands acts of mutually respecting partnership which require a painstaking and time-to-grow establishment of relationships of mutual trust.

The relationships essential for community development work require personnel with particular qualities, attitudes and human relation skills. They will need to respond sensitively to diverse situations, stimulate, suggest methods of work appropriate to the community and the task in hand and provide the kind of self-effacing leadership which is successful to the extent that it creates awareness, motivation, and strengthens and assists others to realise their own full capabilities. The training of personnel to undertake this important development task is very important and the training is not of the kind with which we are very familiar.

Training - some general comments

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that training is training to do - to do something quite specific, and the specific doing must be related very closely to when, where, with what it will be done. Too much so-called training is knowing about rather than doing. Knowing about things is a broader educational endeavour, and like most education, leaves the application and the where and when of the application to be determined, if ever, at an unspecified later time in an indeterminate place by someone other than the educational authority.

Training must be work-specific, directly and clearly related to the operational details of policy, spelled out in job descriptions and specific workplans, and matched as precisely as possible to a detailed task analysis.

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* It has been observed that where people feel that life has denied them the essentials, the unessentials we offer them might as well be as we wish.

The kind of training we are discussing here should merge with practical supervision on the job and be part of an administration's line activity and not part of an unrelated and often disconnected "training institute". No amount of training can make up for the lack of definition in policy, operational clarity, realities in workplans, good supervision and expectation, specific assignments and good feedback of field realities.

The field realities and the problem-solving activites arising from them are the core of any such training. There is no ready-made curriculum, no ready made trainers and very little ready made literature as training materials. The trainee will learn most from the communities he works with if the community is understood to be and utilized as a learning centre and if his trainers can teach him to engage in a life-long process of learning to observe, analyse, respond, become constantly self-critical and cumulatively improve and extend his skills and understanding from situation to situation. UNICEF has a long history of supporting training programmes. Supporting the kind of training based on field learning methods indicated here would be a productive direction to take.

Such a direction in training assistance is perhaps particularly timely. Dorothea Banks has accumulated an immense print-out of UNICEF-supported training courses and is trying to make out their contribution; the Staff Development and Training Section are rethinking their role; the P.S.C. section has moved from being information and media oriented to a more community-involvement orientation; and Mr. Lannert and Randy Wilson are engaged in trying to find what evaluation of UNICEF's past performances is to be found in the files.

Training - A Direction for UNICEF

More than a decade ago UNICEF became concerned about the real impact of training programmes it supported for field level workers ("Change Agents" - was the fashionable term in those days). In the voluminous report that UNICEF* commissioned it was concluded that

> "All who discussed this matter are in accord that in practice no distinct chain of action links identification of social priorities with the appropriate teaching of personnel".

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* "An Exploration of the Curricula of Social Work in Some Countries in Asia, with Special Reference to the Relevance of Social Work Education to Social Development Goals", D. Drucker, Bangkok, 1972.

In a subsequent work the following diagnosis was made

"Cummulative experience in Asia in social welfare and
community development education has clearly shown that many
of the curricula are not based on actual field problems in
the communities or countries served or on the actual
analysis of the jobs to be performed by front-line and
supervisory level personnel;

over-reliance on Western models and theories still exists,
both regarding what subject matter goes into the curricula,
and insufficient indigenization of Western experiences by
trainers from Asia who may have been educated in the West.
First-hand observation and evaluation of the local problems
is often neglected or not seen clearly as the raw building
blocks of both training programmes and social theory.
Ideas currently fashionable in Western social sciences and
social work are used for analysing the complexities of
tradition-laden countries in Asia, whose problems differ
not only in magnitude but also in quality;

most trainers themselves have not had enough in-depth
experience at the grass-root levels in their own countries,
as front-line and supervisory workers;

most trainers do not generally posses the necessary skills
of how to devise a training programme for front-line
supervisory staff based on actual local problems to be
tackled and the analysis of skills of jobs to be performed;
there is very little knowledge and skill of how one gets at
an indigenous curriculum (or social theory in one's own
country).*

In order to deal with the problem identified in the above analysis, the
Mobile Training Scheme (MTS) was invented and implemented to some degree in
Nepal and later operated in Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The MTS has a whole
range of documentation to its credit and an independent evaluation was made of
its work**. A reworking of the basic tenets and methods of MTS which had
intended to establish an on-going cadre of trainers for community-based
planning and programme implementation workers, might be just what is needed at
the current time.

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* "Report to the Office of Technical Co-operation on a Mobile Training
Scheme for the Training of Front-line and Supervisory Development Personnel in
Land-locked an Least Developed Countries of the ECAFE Region", UNDP/ECAFE
Project Development Mission: Frances Maria Yasas, David Drucker, Pratap Singh
Basnyat, Bangkok, 1973.

** "From the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal, A Study of the Mobile
Training Scheme in Action", Steve van Beek.

Inter-Agency Projects

It is against this background and past work with which UNICEF has been associated that the collaboration with the World Bank project relating to information, training and the community-aspects of water supply and sanitation should be placed in context.* Our collaboration with the other partners in this particular project has been weak.**

Carl Widstrand, in his pertinently titled <u>Water Conflicts and Research Priorities</u> points out: "It is often not realised that it is not enough to call for co-operation - the way such co-operation is to be brought about must be spelled out in detail".

In a real sense UNICEF has not used its experience in order to sophisticate the project design, nor is it very likely that the overall product will advance UNICEF's work or field interests as it might have done, unless there is some substantive follow-through.

However, perhaps it is not too late to review UNICEF's role, expecially in the matter of social planning and the training of community workers and to contribute our composite thinking and efforts to a new initiative.

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* Such issues are crucial well beyond Water and Sanitation. See for example Drake, Miller, Humprhrey et al., Analysis of community level nutrition programmes.

** "Field Report, Washington, D.C., D. Drucker, 1 March 1983; and Letter to Mr. McGarry and Mr. McPherson, Cowater, Ontario, 6 May 1983