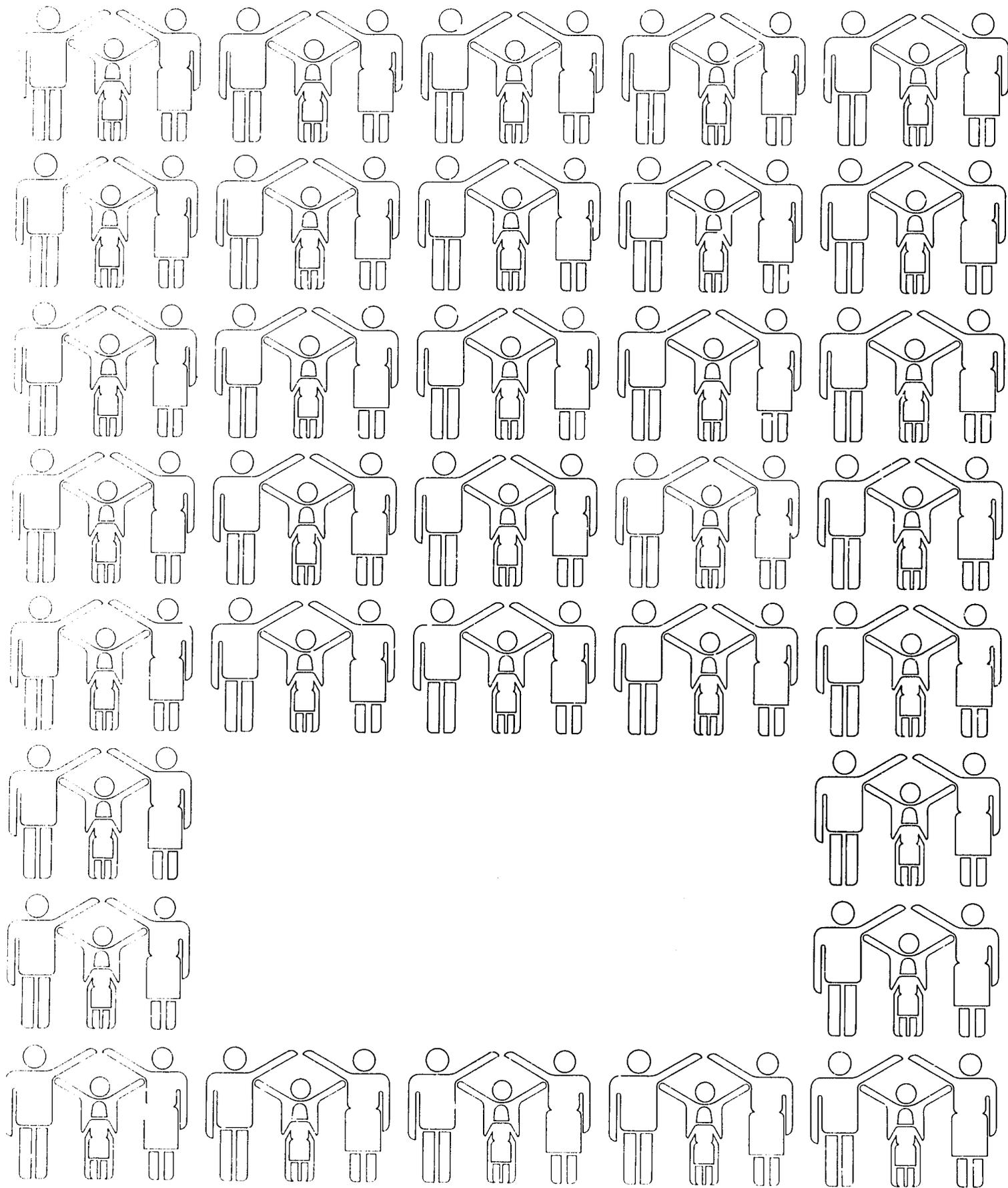


INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING



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**INSTITUTE ISSUE REPORT**  
**OUTREACH STRATEGY FOR**  
**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING**

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## **FOREWORD**

The Institute for International Studies in Natural Family Planning is conducting a series of expert meetings to address specific issues central to its interest in increasing the knowledge, availability, acceptability, and effectiveness of natural family planning and breastfeeding.

The second<sup>(1)</sup> of these meetings, which was held October 20 and 21, 1987 at Georgetown University, addressed the subject of **OUTREACH**. This choice was based on our belief that **outreach** is an essential component of effective natural family planning and breastfeeding program development strategies.

To ensure the appropriateness of natural family planning and breastfeeding promotion programs, to enhance the participation of the community in such programs, and to affect national policies, **outreach** and communication programs must be developed upon solid scientific bases. Market research, audience stratification, and community analysis should precede the implementation of all **outreach** activities.

This **Outreach Meeting** provided a forum for an outstanding group of communication professionals to share ideas and address the important concerns confronting the communication field today, especially in the area of natural family planning. The group focused attention on the need to develop **outreach** programs that are relevant and appropriate to the various audiences, and that are based on sound communication principles and research. The need to develop baseline information regarding existing and potential client populations was particularly stressed.

This report contains the main information conveyed at the meeting, and the recommendations made by the participants to the Institute on specific **outreach** issues. It also attempts to provide a stimulus for the development of comprehensive outreach programs for natural family planning and breastfeeding, and to promote collaboration among public health, family planning, and natural family planning institutions.

Finally, we hope this report will be useful to other individuals and institutions interested in developing outreach and communication programs to promote natural family planning and breastfeeding.

We are particularly grateful for the assistance of Ms. Deborah Rogow in preparing this report. The enthusiasm and innovative ideas of the participants in our Outreach Meeting were of tremendous help to the Institute. We also appreciate the valuable input and guidance of Dr. Victoria Jennings, the Institute's Director.

Rosalia Rodriguez-Garcia, P.H.N., M.Sc.  
Director, Education and Communication

<sup>(1)</sup> A joint Institute - National Institutes of Health expert meeting on non-isotopic assays in reproductive research and ovulation prediction was held in September, 1987.

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## **OUTREACH STRATEGIES**

The combination into a comprehensive program action of all those efforts - Information, Education, Communication, Marketing, and Research - geared toward:

- Expanding community awareness of and access to Natural Family Planning and Breastfeeding services;
- Increasing the number of Breastfeeding women and Natural Family Planning users; and
- Affecting national policies regarding Breastfeeding and Natural Family Planning.

Georgetown University Institute, 1987

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**BACKGROUND ISSUE PAPER  
OUTREACH FOR NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING:  
A STRATEGY REVIEW**

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## INTRODUCTION

Fifteen years ago, modern natural family planning (NFP) methods were virtually unknown outside the Catholic Church and a few church-related NFP organizations. As policy-makers, multi-method family planning providers, population donor agencies, and contraceptive researchers began hearing about NFP, they raised a series of questions: "What are its theoretical and use effectiveness rates?", "Isn't it too complicated for uneducated women to understand?", and "For how many women/couples will NFP really be an acceptable method?" Experience and field research are helping to clarify the first two questions. But the question of whether modern methods of NFP are acceptable to more than a small percentage of the population remains unanswered. And the concern over how to recruit users and develop a visible presence for natural family planning among policy-makers and health professionals continues to be central for many NFP providers.

Traditional NFP providers have depended largely on the support of local parishes and the hard work of volunteer instructors for person to person diffusion of information about NFP and promoting use of the method. This strategy has been very effective in building a "grass-roots NFP movement" and in providing deep motivation for users, but it has limited the growth and heterogeneity of the NFP user population.

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO OUTREACH

In recent years, multi-method family planning providers have increasingly utilized innovative outreach approaches, using the mass and traditional media, with successful results. For example, **television or radio soap operas** have promoted family planning in Indonesia and Jamaica as well as Latin America. Based on research from Mexico and Taiwan, some family planning materials aimed at men are emphasizing economic benefits of spacing pregnancies. Workers in Nigeria stage **community plays** and those in Indonesian villages produce **shadow puppet dramas** to send their messages. Media approaches such as these can significantly reinforce the outreach efforts of NFP institutions.

**Radio** has particular impact in developing countries. Last year's Population Reports (Series J32) states that "family planning radio broadcasts have increased inquiries to youth guidance centers in Latin America, lengthened contraceptive use in Honduras, increased clinic attendance in Nigeria, improved attitudes toward condoms in Colombia, and brought clients to private-sector services in Hong Kong and Egypt."

Recently, NFP providers have also expressed interest not only in recruiting a greater number of users, but in reaching new populations not normally reached by their traditional outreach tactics. For example, a Liberian NFP program had a brief human

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interest spot on television. Client load increased, although this effect was temporary. An NFP provider in Pittsburgh had such an overwhelming response to a carefully targeted **radio campaign** that they had to cancel the broadcast. And an advertising executive based his successful **multi-media campaign** to increase recruitment for the Cedars-Sinai NFP study on **ads** placed according to the demographics of the audience. A Portland program sent **direct-mail** pieces to local Ob-Gyn's to establish their initial client load and referral system. And U.S. and African programs have set up **booths at health fairs**.

## **THE INSTITUTE'S OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

The mission of the Institute is to increase the knowledge, availability, acceptability, and effectiveness of NFP and breastfeeding. **Part of our strategy for education, communication and training development is to support developing countries' efforts and to conduct research to test various approaches to outreach and education.**

To be effective, NFP program outreach strategies must be systematically developed from scientifically based data regarding the needs, knowledge, and perception of potential NFP clients and country leaders. Within this context, the Institute is providing support to several NFP institutions' outreach efforts. The foci of these programs are varied.

For example, the Institute is currently supporting the redesigning of an outreach strategy and information, education and communication (IE&C) materials with CEIP-LAN in Mexico and comprehensive IE&C campaigns with ATLF in Peru, Action Familiale in Mauritius, and "El Programa de Paternidad Responsable y Planificacion Familiar Natural" in Ecuador. These projects will involve the use of a variety of outreach techniques supported by printed materials. Pretesting during materials development and evaluating the impact of different outreach approaches on client recruitment are an integral part of these efforts.

An outreach project with PROVIFA in Ivory Coast will train and assist educators in selected women's centers around the country to provide NFP information to the young women who attend these centers. This project has the potential to reach a very large number of women in a 'new' audience.

Other Institute communication activities are targeting professionals and public leaders. The Peruvian project includes the distribution of an NFP bulletin aimed at business and civic leaders. And an intramural activity is the development of informational packages for policy-makers and country leaders.

In addition, the Institute is collaborating with Javeriana University in a project aimed at nursing school faculty throughout Colombia. This project will create a "round table"

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advisory group, survey nursing professors about their current knowledge and attitudes regarding NFP, and develop seminars based on the results for Colombian and other Latin American nursing faculty.

## **DEVELOPING PRIORITIES FOR NFP OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

### **Target Audiences and Activities**

The need for NFP programs to increase NFP client levels, enhance the programs' visibility in the community, and affect national policies so that NFP is recognized as an appropriate component of a comprehensive national population program, has resulted in outreach becoming an extremely important component of effective NFP program development and management strategies.

Consequently, the Institute has been receiving an increasing number of requests for support of a variety of outreach activities. There is therefore a need to review our strategy and develop priorities and criteria to maximize the utilization of NFP resources both at the Institute and among other population donor agencies.

Several issues emerge in shaping the direction of these priorities. First is the issue of whom to target and to what end. To what extent should the Institute prioritize efforts: 1) to increase the visibility and credibility of NFP among **policy-makers and country leaders**, 2) to promote NFP among **health professionals**, or 3) to recruit more **users**?

A second issue is what specific kinds of activities would best meet any of these priorities and how might this differ by region and by type of program. For example, in a given country or region, would **journal publications, monographs, high-level conferences, or mass media campaigns** most influence policy-makers? Which health professionals should be primarily targeted? Would training **workshops, journal articles, or professional school curricula** be most effective in reaching health professionals? And how can we help programs reach the most users? Assist individual programs in developing **promotional strategies**? Support **training in communication and/or marketing**? Sponsor **materials development**? Conduct **evaluation research** on the outcomes of various outreach strategies? What criteria should be applied in allocating resources to client outreach programs?

### **Questions to Consider**

There are various questions for the Institute to consider in addressing any of these target audiences or means of conducting outreach activities: What experiences have others in the field had? How much do the answers change by country or region? With which other institutions can the Institute collaborate in promoting NFP to any of these

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target groups? What kinds of technical skills and management systems are needed by local organizations to implement comprehensive outreach strategies?

**Are certain approaches more appropriate for multi-method family planning providers?** Multi-method family planning programs attempting to provide NFP may face not only doubts about the method from staff members, but outright resistance from church leaders in referring clients. Here it is not NFP which may need marketing; it is the agency itself.

**Which approaches are most appropriate for traditional NFP organizations which rely on non-professional volunteers who only have a few hours per week for NFP activities?** What political, economic and cultural factors should be considered before adopting strategies which change an organization's public profile from a "movement" to a service delivery institution?

Another question for traditional NFP providers to consider in developing their outreach strategies has to do with message content. For example, the concept of marketing is to develop and package a product which responds to the values and desires of consumers. Here NFP providers may face philosophical considerations. Most traditional NFP providers view NFP as more than a method of avoiding or achieving pregnancy, but as a way of life which integrates spiritual or religious values about family, love, sexuality, and parenthood. And traditional NFP promotion has emphasized this deeper view as an important benefit of NFP. However, the primary factors for most women or couples choosing NFP seems to be that it is "natural and free from side effects and health risks". While these benefits are far from mutually exclusive, it is the 'health' argument which often calls the initial attention of the consumer.

**As NFP providers seek to reach new audiences, what images and messages have been identified for promoting and teaching NFP which address the values and desires of audiences without compromising the values and goals of the NFP group?**

## **CONCLUSION**

Recognizing that outreach plays a crucial role in promoting NFP and breastfeeding services and in increasing credibility for NFP institutions, the Institute is becoming increasingly involved in assessing, developing, and supporting developing countries' efforts in this area. The Institute would obviously like to shape its outreach strategies to utilize its resources as efficiently as possible. Therefore, the experiences and ideas of individuals with NFP and communication expertise will be valuable in addressing the questions raised in this paper and in raising new issues; their recommendations will be taken into consideration by the Institute to formalize its outreach strategy for natural family planning.

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## **EXPERT MEETING REPORT**

Outreach Strategy for Natural Family Planning,  
Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.,  
October 20 and 21, 1987.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On October 20-21, 1987, the Institute for International Studies in Natural Family Planning held an Experts' Meeting to discuss the issue of outreach strategies for Natural Family Planning (NFP). The purposes of this meeting were to:

- 1) analyze those factors that have contributed to or hampered the success of outreach programs;
- 2) identify those outreach approaches that could be more appropriate and adaptable to NFP programs;
- 3) identify possible indicators of successful/appropriate NFP outreach and communication programs;
- 4) recommend specific strategies and/or activities for Institute outreach efforts.

The Director of the Education and Communication Division of the Institute organized and chaired the meeting. Together with Ms. Deborah Rogow, an Institute consultant, Ms. Rosalia Rodriguez-Garcia prepared a background paper for the participants. This paper defined the key target groups for outreach efforts, compared outreach strategies being undertaken by traditional NFP and multi-method family planning programs, explored some of the implications of social marketing schemes for NFP, and raised questions about how the Institute might best use its resources in this area. The ten participants represented various leading population, communications and natural family planning organizations. (See Attachment 1.)

The Chair opened the meetings by sharing the Institute's definitions of NFP and outreach, stating that the Institute is receiving increasing numbers of requests for support for outreach activities, and explaining that the Institute hopes to refine its priorities and become more proactive in shaping the kinds of projects it supports in this area.

Several key, related issues emerged during the two-day discussions. These issues include:

- categories and criteria for outreach projects the Institute might support in developing countries;
- important research questions related to NFP outreach;
- the relative inexperience in communications theory and practice among project staff in many country programs;
- the image of NFP among country leaders and in the population donor community;
- avenues for potential collaboration with other A.I.D. cooperating agencies.

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Recommendations include:

- 1) The Institute should support outreach efforts which are based on proven principles of communication. This means conducting formative research to determine specific audiences and messages, testing materials, evaluating the impact of the interventions, and providing adequate technical assistance throughout a project. Regarding specific channels of communication, there was further agreement that a variety of channels is superior to one channel and that on-going outreach is needed to obtain a sustained effect. Radio is extremely important in developing countries; inter-personal contact remains fundamental in many countries, particularly with NFP information.

Numerous specific existing and proposed projects were discussed in some detail. These included Institute-funded projects, current activities of IFFLP affiliates, and the outreach program developed by SERENA of Canada. The SERENA representative presented a history of the organization as well as a review of their successful outreach efforts, which offered an alternative model to the one proposed by other communication specialists. SERENA has basically looked for various free forms of advertising to any and all interested users. They also send one newsletter to all users and Canadian legislators and diplomats.

- 2) The Institute should explore supporting research in two key areas:
  - Developing a profile of current and potential users. The precise data to be collected, who could conduct such research, how it might be conducted, and most importantly, to what end, were all discussed. One suggestion was a summary of data on those characteristics of users which held constant among different types of provider organizations and different regions (e.g., parity, partner involvement, education, etc.).
  - Determining men's and women's knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding sexuality. While this data would be enormously useful to the family planning field overall, it is particularly salient in studying reliance on periodic abstinence and/or the breastfeeding/postpartum period.
- 3) The Institute should target the population donor community as well as policy-makers and health/family planning leaders as important audiences for outreach to counter bias against NFP and to demonstrate the positive contribution of the Institute to comprehensive health and family planning efforts.
- 4) The Institute should both initiate and respond to proposals for collaboration with other A.I.D. cooperating agencies. Specific suggestions included participating with other cooperating agencies in the development of national communication

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strategy meetings and sending staff from projects supported by the Institute to regional communication skills workshops.

The Experts' Meeting provided a good balance of theoretical and concrete discussion, resulted in little controversy and considerable consensus, and provided clear guidelines for the Institute in reviewing its priorities and strategies for NFP outreach.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Modern methods of natural family planning are relatively effective, inexpensive, and carry no intrinsic health risks. Nonetheless, NFP use worldwide remains quite low with only small increases in NFP use in certain countries. NFP is becoming more available, as education and service delivery programs are developed and expanded in countries around the world. However, health professionals and policy-makers are often skeptical or ignorant of modern NFP, so that few countries have policies favorable to NFP and few multi-method family planning programs include NFP as a method offered. Many programs that provide NFP have little experience in conducting outreach programs that can effectively provide NFP information to couples and the community.

The mission of the Institute is to increase the knowledge, availability, acceptability, and effectiveness of NFP and breastfeeding. In recent months, the Institute has been receiving increasing numbers of requests for support for outreach activities aimed at various target audiences. The Institute is therefore reviewing its priorities for funding to enable it to become more proactive in shaping the type of outreach projects it supports, in both natural family planning and breastfeeding, and is including outreach components in specific projects, as appropriate.

The Experts' Meeting was called to bring together representatives from leading communication and NFP organizations to analyze those factors that have contributed to or hampered the success of outreach programs; identify those outreach approaches that could be more appropriate and adaptable to NFP programs; identify possible indicators of successful/NFP outreach and communication programs; and recommend specific strategies and/or activities for Institute outreach efforts. The issues raised at the meeting related generally but did not correspond directly to these objectives.

A background paper was prepared for the meeting which defined the key target groups for NFP outreach, compared outreach strategies being undertaken by traditional NFP and multi-method family planning programs, explored some of the implications of social marketing for NFP, and raised questions about how the Institute might best use its resources in this area.

## **II. KEY ISSUES TO OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT**

Several key, interrelated issues emerged during the two-day discussions. These issues include:

- 1) categories and criteria for outreach projects the Institute might support in developing countries;
- 2) important research questions related to NFP outreach;

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- 3) the relative inexperience in communication theory and practice among NFP project staff in many country programs;
  - 4) the image of NFP among country leaders and in the population donor community;
  - 5) avenues for potential collaboration with other A.I.D. cooperating agencies.

#### **A. ISSUE 1: Categories and Criteria for Outreach Projects**

##### **Target Audiences**

NFP outreach projects are attempting to influence three key target groups: country leaders and policy-makers, health and family planning professionals and service deliverers, and family planning users. While all these audiences are important, one group may be particularly relevant in any given country. Each one of these audiences will need different kinds of information.

NFP has traditionally been promoted through a grass roots, church-based movement. As a result, many of the target audiences remain generally ignorant of and/or skeptical about NFP.

##### **Approaches**

Outreach approaches, some of which borrow from social marketing techniques (involving audience research, message and materials testing, and evaluation of impact of an outreach intervention), have been used increasingly by multi-method family planning programs in recent years, with considerable success. The adaptation of these approaches to NFP means a greater initial investment of time and money by the Institute in a given project, the transformation of many NFP provider groups from a movement to a service delivery system, and the reconciliation of the health and educational interests of a user population with religious values of a provider group.

##### **Points of Consensus**

**A comprehensive outreach strategy will yield far greater results than a simple materials development and dissemination effort.** Such a strategy is based on basic principles of communication and social marketing and must involve key steps:

- Clarify the objectives of the outreach. (Is it to increase knowledge about, access to, or use of NFP?)
- Define the target audience.
- Analyze the needs and interests of that audience.
- Develop a message tailored to the particular audience.
- Identify the best channels for disseminating the message.

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- Test the relevance of the message to that audience.
  - Test the communication piece for accuracy, clarity, attractiveness, and appropriateness.
  - Disseminate and evaluate the impact of the intervention.

Materials must be seen as one means of an outreach project, and not as the ends. If materials are not appropriate to the target group and the objectives of the organization, they may be not only useless but damaging.

The use of diverse channels of communication is usually better than the use of one channel, and repeating outreach messages is needed to obtain a long-term effect.

Radio is often the most cost-effective channel of communication for family planning outreach in developing countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America. And interpersonal contact remains a fundamental channel of communication and message reinforcement. Social support and counseling for users may be particularly important with NFP and can be best provided via interpersonal contact. Community-triggered ideas have been used effectively in some countries to adapt outreach activities to the grass-roots level. Folk media are also gaining credence as important, culturally relevant tools for family planning communication. Again, formative research is needed to help determine the most appropriate channel in a given setting.

Many NFP groups are small, church-based, volunteer groups. While these characteristics may be positive in many settings, they may restrict the group's access to policy leaders. In these cases, use of media can help a group develop its public profile and have the clout to get visibility with government officials or other leaders.

### **Points for Further Discussion**

**How can formative research be conducted in a way which is relatively efficient and possible for unspecialized staff in developing country programs?**

The issue of when informal research is no longer careful enough to be considered valid is not entirely clear. In general, qualitative research is more flexible in methodology than quantitative research. A focus group can be conducted by a staff person rather than a hired psychologist, but are informal recruitment mechanisms in which participants in focus groups may know one another acceptable? A simple prevalence mini-survey may be useful, but how carefully must the sample be selected?

An outreach approach based on communication principles involves deferring concrete decisions about types and numbers of materials and staff needed for implementing an outreach strategy until that strategy is carefully researched and developed. But

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an organization writing a proposal for an outreach campaign must either request support only for the strategy development process or make some "best guesses" about the staffing and costs for subsequent implementation of that strategy.

These rough estimates are often important for the planning of the NFP organization and the local A.I.D. office (both of whom are generally anxious to initiate service delivery), as well as the sponsoring agency.

Some institutional analysis and needs assessment must be done as part of the proposal development process. Sometimes an institution may feel obligated to offer weak data; the funding agency can encourage them to request support for collecting better data as an initial step. How can the proposal guidelines best capture information yielded by preliminary formative research?

A process for establishing the mutual input by the implementing agency and the funding institution at certain points in materials development and during final approval needs to be established, and included in the written contract or agreement.

**The question of appropriate technology and dependence on international funding sources arises with the export of contemporary communications approaches such as social marketing.**

The Johns Hopkins University Population Communication Services program estimates that it takes a program about two years to institutionalize the outreach process to the point where the institution can then theoretically apply the skills to another project. During this time, 5-6 monitoring and technical assistance visits might be necessary to assist the program, as well as visits during the proposal development stage.

An alternative model was described by the representative from SERENA of Canada. SERENA has recruited a large number (5000 per year) of users by availing themselves of free or very low cost methods of advertising. There has been no scientific approach to selecting their target audiences and virtually no pretesting of materials. They send their national newsletter to doctors, nurses, educators, priests, legislators, and diplomats, both nationally and internationally, while SERENA's local branches send their user's bulletin to their local clients. While their efforts might have produced a greater effect had they been based on research, the SERENA model offered an example of what can be done if an organization has a good knowledge of its potential users and what they "see" in NFP. It did not involve spending time and resources learning new techniques, conducting research, or developing economic dependence on external donor organizations. Although this model was successful in Canada, it may not be easily transferable to a less developed country.

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## **Recommendations**

The Institute should support model programs in NFP outreach. Such programs must be based on a comprehensive strategy which involves clear objectives, adequate research, materials testing, and impact evaluation. Such programs must have measurable objectives and also be potentially adaptable to other settings. The budget should be based upon realistic estimates of eventual costs for each single activity as described in the workplan.

A comprehensive approach also means the donor agency (if it is an A.I.D. cooperating agency) should consult with local A.I.D. officers about the long-term process of developing outreach strategies, provide adequate technical assistance during the proposal development process and project, and ensure that evaluation findings (e.g. message modifications based on focus group results) are valid and made available to other programs.

### **B. ISSUE 2: Research Issues**

Answering certain key research questions might make outreach endeavors more effective. The Institute needs to consider not only what these questions are, but also who could best carry out such research.

**The two key research issues discussed were concepts of sexuality in developing countries and how this affects acceptability of NFP and breastfeeding, and the development of profiles of current and potential users.**

#### **1. Sexuality Research**

##### **Points of Consensus**

**Data on women's knowledge, attitudes, and practices in the area of sexuality are lacking.**

The selection and use of any family planning method involve perceptions about how such a method will or will not affect sexuality. While the family planning field is beginning to acknowledge the need for such research, NFP users and breastfeeding women are particularly impacted by how their family planning method affects their sexuality. An outreach effort should consider these concepts in identifying target audiences, developing messages, and providing education.

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### **Points for Further Discussion**

**There is need to assess the psycho-social and cultural aspects of human sexuality and how couples' perception of normal or advisable sexual behavior affects their ability to practice a family planning method such as natural family planning that requires abstinence from sexual intercourse some days every menstrual cycle.**

Such research could be conducted among men as well as women, could build on the already existing literature, and could involve collaboration with others in the population field.

## **2. Profiles of Current and Potential Users**

### **Points of Consensus**

**Basic information about the NFP user profile and how this profile may change over time or according to who is providing NFP would be helpful to programs hoping to attract more clients.**

However, as NFP providers attempt to attract a broader population of users, they must be cautious about assuming that new users recruited via new marketing techniques will have the same characteristics as previous users. For this reason, finding those parameters which hold true for NFP users at multi-method family planning programs, church-based programs, and community projects would be most useful.

### **Points for Further Discussion**

**The question of who can best carry out this research needs to be addressed. A collaboration between communicators, statisticians and psycho-social researchers might be most effective for this endeavor. In addition, program managers must understand the importance of developing information systems to obtain and analyze pertinent client data.**

## **3. Other Research Questions**

The question of whether a secular or religious approach to NFP will have broader, deeper, and/or longer-lasting appeal is also fundamental. The model, methodology, and feasibility of approaching such a question were not discussed at the expert meeting; however, these points should be explored in further discussions.

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## **Recommendations**

The Institute should explore interest in and avenues for conducting research in the areas of sexuality and NFP user characteristics.

### **C. ISSUE 3: Communication Skills of Local NFP Staff**

The relative inexperience in communications theory and practice of many local NFP groups is a serious detriment to these groups' ability to develop effective outreach programs. Training should be provided to individuals responsible for outreach programs. For the training to be of real value, participants should come with the objective of developing specific outreach programs or activities.

#### **Points of Consensus**

**Training and technical assistance are both needed to help a program develop the skills to plan and conduct outreach activities.**

#### **Points for Further Discussion**

**Should the Institute develop other workshops in addition to the management/outreach training that has been provided in Africa? Two other management/outreach workshops are planned, one in Africa and another in Latin America.**

**Should the Institute send staff of supported projects to regional workshops organized by other agencies in Africa or Latin America?**

#### **Recommendations**

No clear recommendations were made to the Institute in this area beyond the general consensus that both training and technical assistance are important in strengthening the outreach abilities of an organization to carry out a comprehensive outreach project.

### **D. ISSUE 4: Image of NFP in the Population Donor Community**

People in the population field have traditionally been fairly uninformed about NFP. The strong ideological partiality of many NFP providers against other methods has not helped make the population community more receptive to NFP. And the less-than-rigorous scientific studies which some NFP groups have cited about the method's effectiveness and benefits have made the population experts even more skeptical.

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Although Georgetown University enjoys substantial respect as an academic institution, the Institute is still a newer member of the A.I.D. population cooperating agency community. This is undoubtedly another factor in that community's attitudes toward a new agency that addresses natural family planning. This meeting was considered a successful step towards enhancing NFP, and the image of the Institute as a scientifically oriented and experienced institution.

### **Points of Consensus**

**The Institute should continue to initiate activities which will enhance its profile and the image of NFP and breastfeeding among population donor groups and A.I.D. officers.**

Publication in professional journals, participation in regional conferences such as PAHO or A.I.D. meetings, etc. is also important. The wide distribution of the Institute's reports was also considered important. Finally, collaboration with other A.I.D. cooperating agencies will create opportunities for those agencies to know the Institute and NFP/breastfeeding issues in more depth.

The Experts' Meeting itself was also viewed as very important in establishing contact, allowing for a professional and collegial relationship, and laying the basis for potential collaboration in the future.

While the anti-NFP prejudices should be addressed directly, the Institute's best argument for NFP and its work should be its track record and results.

### **Points for Further Discussion**

The priorities for these activities needs to be developed. The list of journals in which it is most strategic to publish should be compiled, and the journals should be consulted about the issues they would most like to present. IPPF's *People* and the Population Council's *Studies in Family Planning* were both mentioned as important.

### **Recommendations**

No specific recommendations were made beyond the consensus that the Institute should target the population donor community as its own "audience" for outreach.

## **E. ISSUE 5: Avenues for Collaboration with Other A.I.D. Cooperating Agencies**

A.I.D. encourages the cooperating agencies to collaborate so that the special knowledge and skills of each agency can be used as a resource to the entire field. The Institute has just begun to collaborate with IMPACT on the development of NFP and

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breastfeeding promotion materials for policy-makers and with PIACT/PATH on outreach planning and materials development in Latin America. The Johns Hopkins Population Communications Service has worked with the Institute to develop the outreach component of the Institute's management and outreach seminars for NFP programs. With IFFLP, the Institute is working to develop the outreach capabilities of several NFP programs in Africa and Latin America. Other agencies such as the Academy for Educational Development have considerable expertise in communications which would be valuable to the Institute. Similarly, the Institute can provide expertise and projects related to NFP and breastfeeding which will be important to these agencies in fulfilling their mandate to include NFP and breastfeeding in their A.I.D.-funded work.

### **Points of Consensus**

The common practice of passing draft materials among colleagues of different cooperating agencies as for review and feedback is very helpful. This not only gives the Institute expert feedback on the materials and on what the population community thinks after NFP, but also keeps this community informed of the Institute's work in NFP and breastfeeding education, promotion, and research. Undoubtedly, funding a joint project would allow both cooperating agencies to have considerable exchange, for the benefit of a country program.

**The Institute should tap into already established channels of communication to disseminate information.** This includes not only collaborating with journal sponsors for professional articles, but also collaborating on the program level, e.g., sending information to the Academy for Educational Development for their PCS-funded URTNA project to turn into radio scripts and send to stations around the world; or participating in in-country strategy meetings of donor groups.

### **Points for Further Discussion**

Issues of reciprocity, financing, and "territory" need to be addressed in developing collaborative activities with other cooperating agencies. The input of the A.I.D. office would be useful in facilitating or resolving some of these issues.

### **Recommendations**

The Institute should initiate and respond to opportunities for appropriate collaboration with other cooperating agencies. Other expert meetings on issues of common interest such as an informed consent and informed choice could provide one such opportunity.

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### **III. CONCLUSION**

The meetings resulted in little controversy and considerable consensus. There was a good balance in the discussion between the theoretical issues (e.g., the principles of social marketing, the importance of improving the Institute's and NFP's image in the donor community, etc.) and concrete information and suggestions (e.g., anecdotes of program experiences, specific suggestions for implementing the recommendations, etc.).

The key recommendations were: 1) to ensure that communication projects whether they are promotional or research focused, include a comprehensive outreach strategy; 2) to explore interest and avenues for learning about women's sexual experience in developing countries and how that affects the acceptability of NFP and breastfeeding; 3) to promote research to collect data about NFP users which would be useful to designing outreach; and 4) to initiate intramural activities which will enhance the Institute's and NFP's image in the country leader and population donor communities. Collaboration with other cooperating agencies was also seen as an important step in its own right.

While the appropriate mechanisms for advancing each of these recommendations need to be developed, the general guidelines coming from the Experts' Meeting are complementary and could form the basis of a proactive strategy for Institute support of outreach efforts.

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

## OUTREACH STRATEGY FOR NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING

### Participating Experts

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**OUTREACH STRATEGY**  
**FOR**  
**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING**

**EXPERTS' MEETING: OCTOBER 20 AND 21, 1987**

**AGENDA**

October 20

- 9:00 a.m. Welcome
- 9:30 Participants Presentations
- 10:30 Morning Session\*  
Target Audience for NFP Outreach programs:  
policy-makers, health professionals, users.
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch (hosted by the Institute)
- 1:45 Afternoon Session\*  
Image of NFP institutions in the health and  
population community. "From a movement to a  
service delivery institution".
- 5:00 Adjourn

October 21

- 9:00 a.m. Morning Session\*  
Components of outreach programs:  
Education, mass-media, door-to-door, publications.
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch (hosted by the Institute)
- 1:30 Afternoon Session\*  
Conclusions  
Recommendations for Institute's outreach strategy.  
"...What is Next?"
- 4:00 Adjourn

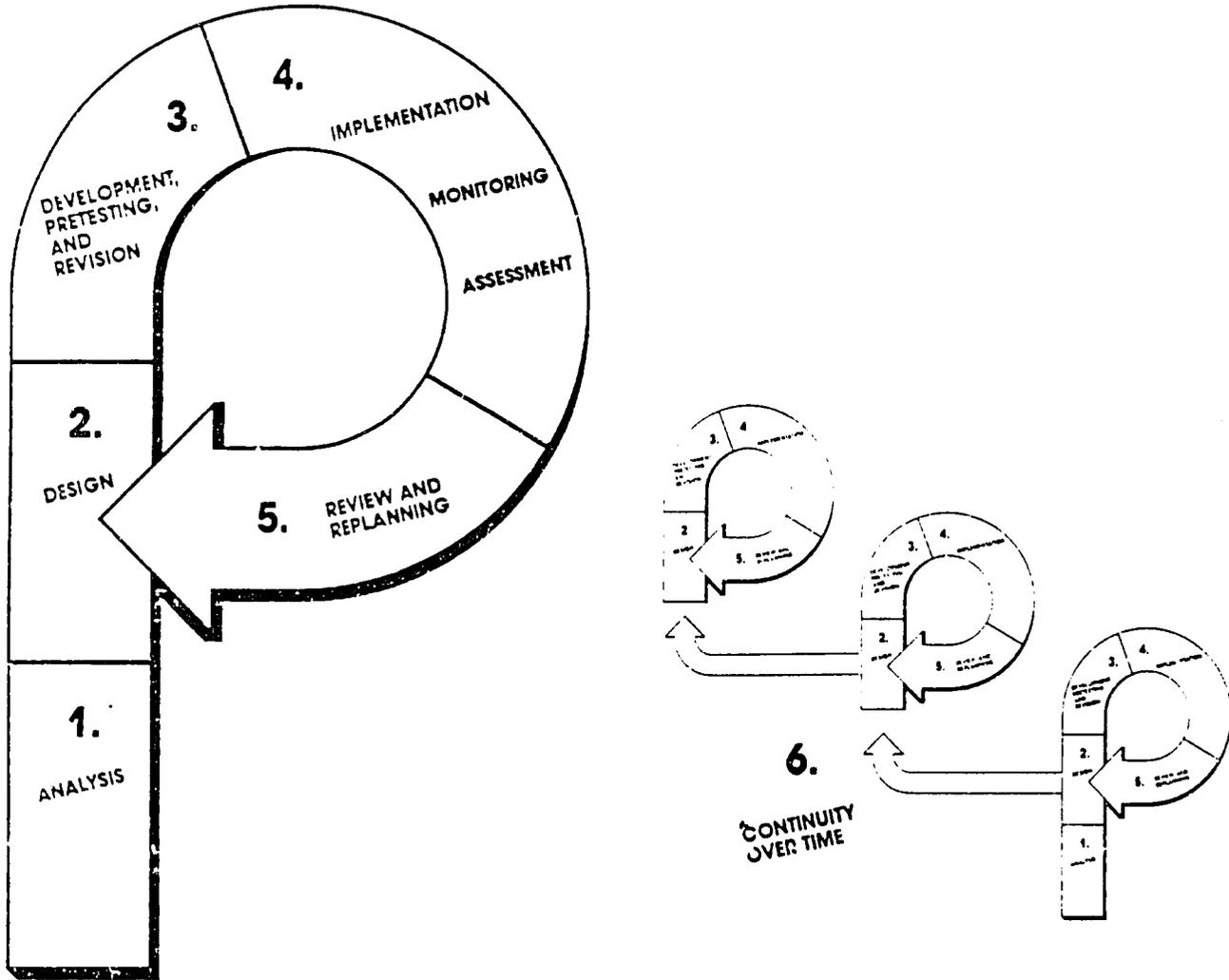
\* The questions raised in the background paper and in the letters from the Institute will be used to guide the discussion.

## **APPENDICES**

The following charts and tables were suggested by Expert Meeting participants as useful tools for the development of outreach programs or educational materials.

Based on their experience, the participants recommend that a systematic approach be applied to any outreach development effort whether the emphasis is on education and training, mass-media, or the development of materials.

# POPULATION COMMUNICATION PROCESS



## 1. ANALYSIS

- Review Potential Audiences
- Assess Existing Policies and Programs
- Select Sponsoring Institutions
- Evaluate Communication Resources

## 2. DESIGN

- Decide on Objectives
- Identify Audiences
- Develop Messages
- Select Media
- Plan for Interpersonal Reinforcement
- Draw up Action Plan

## 3. DEVELOPMENT, PRETESTING, AND REVISION

- Develop Message Concepts
- Pretest with Audience
- Complete Messages and Materials
- Pretest with Audience
- Retest Existing Materials

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

- Implement Action Plan
- Monitor Outputs
- Measure Impact

## 5. REVIEW AND REPLANNING

- Analyze Overall Impact
- Replan Future Activities

## 6. CONTINUITY OVER TIME

- Plan for Continuity
- Adjust to Changing Audience Needs

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## COMMUNICATION

Checklist for developing communication projects for policy makers.

- Objectives
- Message
- Audience
- Needs and Interests of Audience
- Relevance of Message to Audience
- Channels
- Data

Correct?

Recent?

- Presentation

Clear?

Brief?

Attractive?

Appropriate?

From IMPACT, Population Reference Bureau

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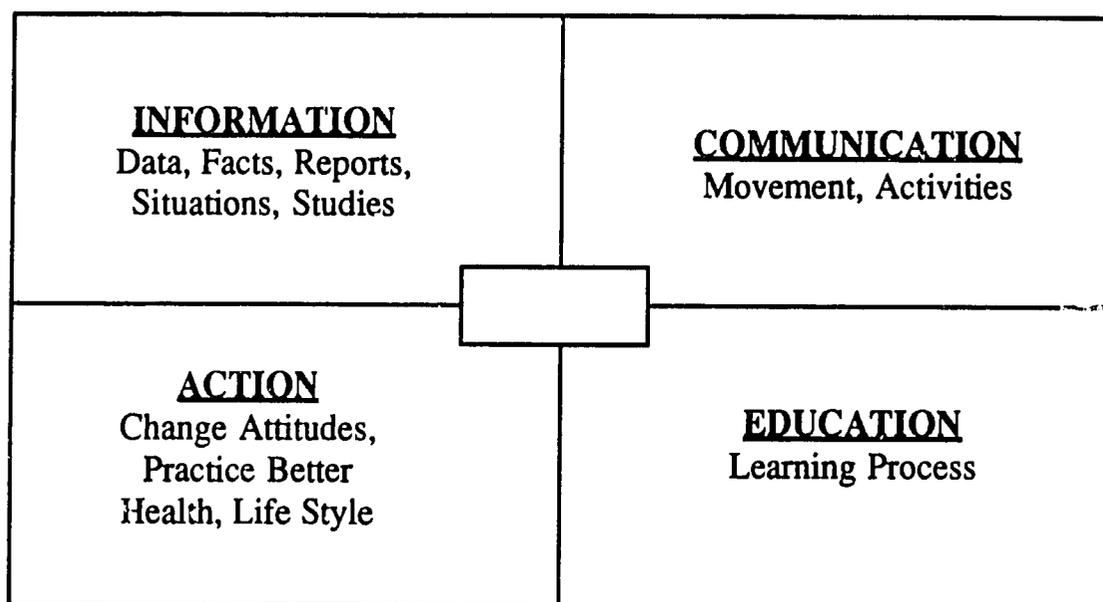
## CHECKLIST FOR ISSUING A NEWS RELEASE

- Be sure that what is new and newsworthy is clear and in the first paragraph.
- Cover who, what, when, where, why and how near the beginning of the news release.
- Clearly identify the source of news release, including name of organization, address, contact person and telephone numbers (office and home).
- Specify the time of release or state "For Immediate Release".
- Use simple language.
- Include usable quotes from key people.
- Raise local issues which relate to topic.
- Keep length under three pages.
- Check and update press list.
- Deliver on time for deadlines.
- Call key media people to be sure they received news release and encourage them to do story.
- Keep records of who used news release and who didn't.
- Save press clippings or notes on broadcast programs.

From PCS, The Johns Hopkins University

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**DISSEMINATION OF HEALTH  
MESSAGES THROUGH THE MEDIA**



From the World Health Organization

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## FOCUS GROUPS

In developing its culturally appropriate materials for nonreaders, PIACT has used a technique called the *focus group session* - in-depth discussions among representatives of the intended audience. The focus group is a research method borrowed from commercial marketing. The results of focus group sessions are qualitative - an exploration of feelings rather than a quantitative tabulation of yes-and-no answers to limited questions. A focus group is usually formed with 6-10 persons from homogeneous backgrounds or interests. Under the guidance of a moderator, topics related to the subject matter of the research are discussed; in PIACT's projects they discussed reproductive behavior and contraception. The objective is to learn how people behave, and in particular, why.

Focus group discussions are conducted as an open-ended conversation, usually 1-2 hours in length, in which all participants are encouraged to interact with one another - to comment on the topics, to ask questions of one another, to respond to others' comments. The sessions enable the investigators to hear and observe the groups' reactions toward the topics (a contraceptive method) and to gain insight into the participants' knowledge, beliefs, and concerns.

The focus groups in PIACT's projects were helpful in providing background and suggestions for the proposed printed materials to ensure the selection of meaningful symbols and messages. Users of a particular contraceptive method were encouraged to discuss their experiences - side effects that may have occurred, sources of information on the method, questions they had and the explanations they received, and how they saw the advantages and disadvantages of the method. Group sessions sometimes revealed rumors and misconceptions about the contraceptive method, pointing out important topics for the booklet to cover. Specially selected groups that were particularly helpful were contraceptive acceptors who had tried a method and then discontinued its use, and potential users who had heard about the method but, for one reason or another, had not tried it.

In any focus group, the role of the moderator is crucial, since this person must guide the discussion using nonjudgmental, open-ended questions in such a way that participants never feel threatened and are encouraged to say whatever they feel. There can never be any right or wrong answers. Everyone must also feel comfortable; hence the emphasis on finding homogeneous groupings. It is usually desirable for the discussion leader to be of the same sex as the participants. The great advantage of the group interview method is its creation of an informal, relaxed and anonymous setting where participants can speak without fear of pressure or censure from others.

From Zimmerman, M. & Perkin, G. (1982). Print materials for nonreaders: Experiences in family planning and health. PIACT Paper Eight.

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## **GUIDELINES FOR NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING OUTREACH SERVICES**

### **Outreach Plan**

The natural family planning program director should develop an outreach plan specific to the community and agency that it serves.

### **Procedure**

- Develop an area profile considering the economic, social, religious and cultural influences within the community.
- Identify community response to establishing a natural family planning program.
- Develop positive interagency contacts to facilitate referral for multiple health-social referral situations.
- Organize a multi-disciplinary community advisory board for the natural family planning agency.
- Identify the priority groups for outreach efforts. For example, former clients, special interest groups, as well as professional family planning and health care groups who may refer clients.
- Specify the content of the outreach message, including description of what the natural family planning methods are, and where to go for natural family planning services.
- Identify the outreach methods that would be utilized, including hospital postpartum visits, direct community contact programs, literature, audio-visual information programs, television, radio, newspaper, and local community gathering places.
- Develop outreach materials, including pamphlets describing what the natural family planning methods are, where the natural family planning services are and who will provide the services. Emphasize the competencies of the service provider agency.
- Develop a means to evaluate and update the outreach plan at least on an annual basis.

From the Human Life and Natural Family Planning Foundation