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OPTIONS

Communicating Population and Family Planning Information to Policymakers

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OPTIONS

for Population Policy

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COMMUNICATING POPULATION AND FAMILY PLANNING INFORMATION TO POLICYMAKERS

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PREFACE

OPTIONS for Population Policy II is a five-year project funded by the Office of Population of the U.S. Agency for International Development. The goal of the project is to help USAID-assisted countries formulate and implement policies that address the need to mobilize and effectively allocate resources for expanding family planning services. The project provides technical assistance to:

- ▶ improve the analytic capacity of developing country institutions to design, manage, and monitor family planning programs;
- ▶ assess legal and regulatory policies affecting the delivery of family planning services;
- ▶ promote efficient use of public sector resources in family planning programs; and
- ▶ increase private sector participation in service delivery.

The OPTIONS II Project has developed special policy approaches to promote expanded support for family planning. Technical experts have prepared working papers aimed at codifying project experience and analytic approaches. The papers are intended to provide uniform guidance to OPTIONS current and future staff, furnish USAID/W and Mission staff with analytic tools to improve program and strategic planning, and help developing country policymakers and analysts to conceptualize and critically analyze policy aspects of the population sector.

The papers are being published as part of an ongoing Policy Paper Series focusing on various aspects of operational policy in family planning. Titles in the Policy Paper Series include:

- (1) Assessing Legal and Regulatory Reform in Family Planning
- (2) Strategic Planning for the Expansion of Family Planning
- (3) Policy Issues in Expanding Private Sector Family Planning
- (4) Communicating Population and Family Planning Information to Policymakers
- (5) Cost Recovery and User Fees in Family Planning

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OVERVIEW

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The support of policymakers is key to ensuring that population policies and family planning programs are successful. Policymakers directly responsible for population policies and programs need appropriate information to: (1) identify policy needs; (2) design appropriate policies; (3) ensure that policies and programs have the necessary resources; (4) implement these policies and programs; and finally, (5) to evaluate the impact of these policies. Policymakers indirectly involved need information so that they can understand and support these policies and programs. All policymakers can affect the environment in which population policies and programs are implemented. In the case of family planning service delivery, for example, policymakers can ensure that no inappropriate legal and regulatory barriers exist. They can also facilitate involvement of the private sector.

The OPTIONS Project assists institutions in developing countries in communicating population and family planning information to policy audiences. These communication activities are intended both to strengthen political commitment to population policies and family planning programs and to provide policy audiences with practical information to design and carry out population policies and family planning efforts effectively.

This manual provides a framework and step-by-step approach to addressing a set of policy communication needs. It is designed to serve as a guideline for individuals and institutions interested in communicating population and family planning information to policy audiences in developing countries.* The guidelines draw largely upon the experiences of the Population Reference Bureau in implementing the IMPACT Project, and upon previous work of the OPTIGNS Project. IMPACT was a USAID-supported project created to provide assistance to developing country institutions to effectively communicate population and family planning information to key policy audiences within their own country or region.

The following section presents a framework and specific activities to implement a policy communication plan. The second section discusses how these communication activities can be evaluated. Each section contains a summary of the guidelines presented that is meant to be used as a quick reference for developing and evaluating communication activities.

* As a supplement to the guidelines described in this document, the reader may also be interested in a forthcoming publication from the Center for Communication Programs at the Johns Hopkins University, School of Hygiene and Public Health, entitled *Communicating about Family Planning: State of the Art*. This volume provides a compendium of lessons learned about using communication to promote fertility control, child spacing, reproductive health, and sexual responsibility (see Piotrow et al., forthcoming).

FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Introducing an important innovation into a society is a complex process. One lesson learned from decades of experience working in population and family planning programs is that support of policymakers is essential. Securing that support is not easy or quick and calls for good communication at every level. Advocates of population change and family planning—and all people who wish to introduce a significant innovation into society—must pay careful attention to the following elements of a communication plan:

- establish clear communication *objectives*, based on careful assessments of how information can shape the policy environment for expanding family planning;
- identify the target *audience*, whose views and decisions affect the availability and allocation of resources for family planning and the successful implementation of policies and programs;
- shape *messages* to the needs and interests of that audience;
- make sure that the *source of the message* is someone whom the audience trusts and respects;
- select an appropriate *channel* to reach the intended audience; and
- present messages in a *format* that is suited to both the audience and the channel used to reach the audience—and pretest the “product.”

From the onset of activities, it will be helpful to create a written document that

states the full communication plan, describing the plan objectives, target audience, source of message, channel, and format. The timeline, level of effort, media plan, and budget information should also be included. This document should be amended throughout the activity as changes occur, but a copy of the original document should be kept for reference.

Each of the elements in a communication plan is described in greater detail below.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives should be clear to the advocate or they certainly will not be clear to the audience. They should be measurable and expressed as the answer to the following questions: If a campaign is successful, what will happen? What are the desired outcomes? What will people do? In the case of family planning, answers might be to: develop political commitment to family planning, develop national plans for expanding family planning services, increase public sector allocations to family planning, promote legal and regulatory reform to facilitate family planning service delivery, or increase private sector resources for family planning (see Appendix A).

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience is identified based on the objectives to be achieved. It represents the answer to these questions: Who can do this? Or help? Or stop being an obstacle? While the categories of people who meet this description are not identical from place to place, in most countries they are the individuals and leadership groups who have the power to make law, effect regulations and practices,

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set policies, or influence all of the above. In terms of bringing about change in the scope and quality of family planning, these powerful or influential groups are likely to include political leaders, government officials, private and public health system providers, managers of existing family planning programs, educators, religious leaders, women's organizations, business and civic associations, and the press and broadcast media. In some places, the range of audiences is wide and may encompass groups that are unlikely to meet each other such as donors in skyscrapers and traditional healers in villages. Clearly each very different audience requires a specific and appropriate mode of communication. Audience research is essential to help identify these modes as well as important perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge levels.

It will be important to clearly describe and document who the target audience is and to record this information, perhaps in formal documents. This will help to keep the communication plan focused on them throughout its development, as well as during the evaluation of activities. Once the right audience (vis-à-vis the objectives) is identified, all other elements of the communication plan flow logically.

MESSAGE

Most people shape their messages to the needs and interests of a particular audience as a matter of common sense. This means that the message communicated to an educator to include family planning in family life education would be different from the family planning message transmitted to officials in the Ministry

of Health. Some examples of appropriate messages for specific audiences follow.

1. Understanding of family planning methods and their benefits and risks enhances students' knowledge and competence. (Family life educators)
2. Family planning promotes maternal and child health. (Health leaders)
3. Family planning promotes maternal and child health *and* women's autonomy. (Women's groups)
4. High-quality services, including good counseling and follow-up, increase acceptance, continuation, and method compliance. (Family planning program leaders)
5. Family planning is consistent with moral values concerning human sexuality; additionally, it promotes parental responsibility for the health and well-being of the family. (Religious leaders)
6. Population/family planning is a good news story. (The media)
7. Family planning is a good investment. (Business or health insurance leaders)
8. Reducing birth rates can reduce the government's future burden in health, education, and employment. (Political leaders)

Audience research—particularly qualitative research such as focus group discussions and in-depth interviews—helps to identify appropriate messages for various audiences. Whoever the target audience may be, it is important to remember three other points about messages.

- ▶ Ideally, there should be only one main point communicated, or if that is not possible, two or three at the most. It is better to leave people with a clear idea of one message than to confuse or overwhelm them with too many.
- ▶ Messages should always be pretested with representatives of the audience to ensure that the message being sent is the one being received.
- ▶ The message should not only persuade through sound data and logic—the “why”—but should also include the *actions* the audience is being encouraged to undertake—the “what next.” The audience needs to know clearly what to do: “include family planning in maternal and child health services” or “use data from the Demographic and Health Survey to identify service needs.”

SOURCE OF MESSAGE

The message source—an individual or organization—must be trusted by the particular audience receiving the message. For policy audiences, there are two basic types of sources of messages or spokespersons: change agents and opinion leaders. Both types of message sources play important roles in promoting change. Change agents usually do not belong to the target audience, but are highly respected by the target audience, such as international experts or country leaders. Their opinions, when made public, often influence opinion leaders. Opinion leaders are prominent, trusted members of the actual target audience and usually live or work among the target audience. This suggests that a respected medical leader would be a

more credible source to carry the family planning message to the health community than a religious leader—and vice-versa. When the message is delivered at a conference, the best source would be a leader who is not only respected, but who is also popular and a lively speaker.

Sometimes an “outsider,” such as a visiting dignitary, can be an effective spokesperson, although the ideal source is usually perceived by the target audience as a local or national figure.

CHANNELS

A communication channel is the means by which a message gets from one individual or group to another. There are two primary types of channels: mass media and interpersonal. Mass media channels are those that allow one or a few individuals to communicate to many (for example, television, radio, and newspapers) and are particularly effective in increasing knowledge of an issue in a targeted audience. Interpersonal channels involve a face-to-face exchange between two or more individuals and are often more effective in changing attitudes of a targeted audience. Both channels are complementary and have the potential to encourage behavioral change in a targeted population.

Of course, the channel used to reach the desired audience must be equally well-matched. If the goal is to increase the public’s or policymakers’ awareness and knowledge of family planning, mass media is an excellent channel to use. However, if the goal is to change a high-level policymaker’s attitude toward family planning, interpersonal channels may be more effective. A mass mailing to mid-level

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government officials might be quite appropriate, but is less likely to work for people at the very top. In this case, a personal visit from a highly respected leader (the source) or a booklet accompanied by a hand-delivered personal note would be more appropriate. For some audiences, a small gathering such as a staff meeting is the right forum, and for others a district, regional, or national conference is a good channel for communication. A national conference which is followed by a local workshop to discuss local implementation is more likely to lead to action than a national conference alone. In addition, research has shown that two or more people from one institution attending a conference are more likely to act on the information obtained than a single representative. Communication research shows that the best communication plans combine mass media channels with interpersonal channels to achieve a two-pronged effect.

FORMATS

The format in which a family planning message is presented must be appropriate to all of the above—the audience, the source, and the channel. The formats available are as varied as one's imagination, but identifying the appropriate format for each audience calls for good communication strategies. For example, a personal memo from one high-ranking leader to another might be a better format for getting immediate attention than an impersonal booklet. The higher the level of policymaker, the less time he or she has to devote attention to a particular issue. One-page fact sheets or briefing papers are "quick fixes" for this busy audience, especially if accompanied by slightly

longer, well-documented summaries of research that can be handed over to their staffs. For most audiences, however, a brief, attractive and clearly written booklet is a convenient way to convey information.

Visual aids nearly always make a presentation more memorable than a speech alone ("A picture is worth a thousand words"). The combination of vivid audio-visuals, a lively oral presentation and a brief, attractive booklet to leave with the audience is highly recommended. (See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of how to use visual aids, particularly computer graphics and slides, to make a dynamic presentation.) Workshops and conferences have overall formats, too. It is important to remember that a conference comprised of a series of long speeches tends to eventually lose the interest of much of its audience. Using a mix of presentations, audio-visuals, small-group work, games or simulations, discussion, and problem-solving exercises will engage the audience far more than the typical lecture format—involvement is the key.

Other formats are also useful. A colorful, uncluttered (and simple) poster can convey a constant message if it is put up on the wall. Press releases and fact sheets that can be adapted quickly are helpful formats for media audiences; ready-to-use photos or graphics make them even better.

Whatever the format chosen to convey the message, it should be characterized by the following:

1. **Clarity:** technical language, statistical terms, and mathematical models do not engage the attention or interest of

nontechnical audiences. If technical terms and descriptions of models must be included, they can be put in an appendix. Complex graphics should also be avoided: even three-dimensional bar charts are harder to understand than the usual two-dimensional ones.

2. **Brevity:** five to ten pages is best for a booklet; very few people read longer reports or monographs in their entirety. If the booklet is longer than ten pages, an executive summary and table of contents at the beginning and a short list of recommendations at the end are essential. Since research on reading habits has found that many busy people read only enlarged quotes and the captions to photographs, including these elements for each main point is useful.
3. **Attractiveness:** good design need not be expensive. Keeping the text brief will allow for more white space on the page, which is more pleasing to the eye and easier to read. Simple charts, and especially photos and captions, are important complements to text for telling the story.
4. **Accuracy:** data must be as accurate as possible. Experts, including people who are not advocates, should review the message. The benefits of family planning or of slowing population growth should not be exaggerated, as this will invite refutation or at least challenge and will ultimately be counterproductive. No one intervention will solve all problems; people trust a dispassionate rather than a zealous voice. Pretesting material with both experts and representatives of the

target audience will help to ensure accuracy and the appropriate tone.

5. **Timeliness and timing:** information will be more relevant if it is attached to other issues that are of concern in the society at the moment—AIDS, the environment, infant mortality, women's status. Data from a survey should be communicated as soon as possible after the survey is completed to be of maximum interest. At the same time, policy communication is an ongoing process. It takes time; one booklet, conference, or broadcast is never enough. And, of course, care must be taken during a natural disaster or political upheaval. A good planner of communication strategies recognizes when a social situation lends itself to social mobilization or policy support around an issue.

It is never easy to bring about significant societal change, especially in areas as potentially controversial as population and family planning. In addition to good luck, it takes time, effective partnerships, careful planning, and a sound communication strategy. The way the message is communicated to policymakers can have a great effect on the overall results.

IMPLEMENTATION

Once decisions about the main components of a communication plan have been made, that is, communication objectives defined, target audience designated and researched, message content ascertained, message source identified, channels selected and formats determined, an implementation plan should be developed. This plan should include:

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- a timeframe, description of resources needed, a budget and a schedule for addressing all elements of the communication plan;
- a plan to pretest the messages and the formats in which they are to be communicated, specifying who will review the messages, how many people will review the messages, and at what stage in the development of the messages reviews will occur. Pretesting is essential to developing an effective communication effort. Ideally, messages in their completed form should be pretested, but often this is not possible. For example, it is often too expensive to pretest a completed booklet or wall chart. A reasonable and feasible alternative is to send the text of a booklet or a poster mock-up to members of the target audience for review and comment prior to finalizing the message and the format in which it will be communicated; and
- a plan to disseminate the messages. This should include a schedule of to whom the message will be disseminated, when, by what means, by whom, how often, and how many copies will be distributed.

The elements for developing a successful communication plan are summarized on the following page.

DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN: SUMMARY GUIDELINES

1. DEVELOP COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVES

(a) Identify key policy issues, constraints, and problems for which information can serve as part of the solution. [What needs to be done?]

(b) Assess the potential role of selected information in shaping the policy environment.

2. IDENTIFY THE TARGET AUDIENCE

Select a target audience whose views and decisions affect the implementation of policies and programs. [Who can use the information for policy change? Or help? Or stop being an obstacle?]

3. DETERMINE THE CONTENT OF MESSAGES

(a) Identify concerns, attitudes, and knowledge levels of policy audiences through quantitative and qualitative research.

(b) Assess the availability of required data or the need to research additional information relevant to audiences.

(c) Identify data analysis needs including the types of analytic tools and models required.

4. DETERMINE THE MESSAGE SOURCE

Select the most appropriate individuals and/or organizations to deliver the message to the target audience.

5. SELECT APPROPRIATE CHANNELS

The two main types of channels are: mass media and interpersonal commu-

nication. When trying to influence many persons at one time, mass media is a good choice, if within budget. When trying to influence a small group or one or two persons, the interpersonal channel is a good choice. One or both may be used in a communication activity.

Mass media: radio, television, newspapers, newsletters, mass mailings.

Interpersonal: workshops, seminars, conferences, meetings, dialogue, hand-delivered or personal letters.

6. SELECT FORMATS

Formats should be suited to both the audience and the channel used: memos, personal letters, fact sheets, booklets, wall charts, flip charts, storyboards, videos, slides, overheads, software program, press releases, posters.

7. DEVELOP THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

(a) Establish timeframe and resource needs.

(b) Establish message pretesting plan, including: developing a step-by-step process, pretesting the message and format with appropriate audiences, devising a mechanism for incorporating the results into the communication plan and materials, and documenting the process.

(c) Establish distribution plan for materials.

EVALUATING COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

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Communication plays a vital role in the achievement of population and family planning objectives. Thus it is important to evaluate communication activities, to identify areas in need of correction as the activities are implemented, and later to determine whether the activities have been effective.

All communication activities are difficult to evaluate. They do not easily lend themselves to the quasi-experimental designs of operations research or its clear findings (e.g., "female health workers had higher acceptance rates than male health workers"). It is similarly difficult to document that a particular set of activities has led to a more favorable "climate" for family planning. This is because it is hard to isolate the effect of a report, booklet, manual, conference, workshop, staff presentation, study tour, broadcast, or computerized database from the many other factors that influence an audience. Who should conduct the evaluation also needs to be considered. If a communication activity is controversial, an outside evaluation may be advisable and would counter a perceived evaluation bias.

There are several approaches to assessing the quality and impact of communication efforts. These approaches fall into three categories: performance evaluation, outcome evaluation, and impact evaluation.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This kind of evaluation is also called process evaluation; it is conducted to see if communication activities are well done and proceeding as planned. It reviews the quantity of work and whether it is "delivered" as planned—in the numbers (e.g.,

four workshops, one poster, one slide presentation, three booklets, and 100 participants), locations (one in the capital city; three others in regional centers), and the timing (one each quarter) that was promised. It is a familiar part of all activity monitoring and external evaluations.

Performance evaluation also includes the quality of activities. (The checklists in Appendix A are tools to evaluate as well as to plan communication activities.) Performance evaluation looks at all the information "products" and asks:

- 1. In view of the objectives, was the target audience reached by this booklet (report, conference, etc.)? Were any important groups left out?
- 2. Were the messages appropriate to the particular audience (i.e., different emphasis for political versus health versus religious leaders) as determined by audience research? Were they few in number, clear and nontechnical, and action-oriented?
- 3. Were the messages delivered by the most credible and influential sources for the audience (also ascertained from audience research)?
- 4. To communicate the message, were the best channels used to reach the audience (e.g., a report hand-delivered by a respected local professor to the top government officials; a national conference for regional leaders; institutional delivery of booklets for mid-level health personnel; media for the middle class public)?

Was the format (i.e., summary report, wall chart, slide show, video, booklet,

etc.) appropriate for the audience? Were the products visually attractive? Were they simple and uncluttered? Were they easy to read and understand? And—very important—were they pretested with representatives of the target audience? Was the content reviewed by other experts for accuracy?

- ▼ Was the timing right? Was the message delivered when there was not overwhelming competition for the audience's attention (e.g., recent earthquake or heightened political unrest)? Was the message delivery timed to take advantage of opportunities to link it to other campaigns or conferences (e.g., on women's issues or the environment)? The importance of an issue is signaled by its durability: was the message repeated often enough to build in a multiplier effect?

OUTCOME EVALUATION

It is not enough to know whether communication activities have been well planned, implemented, and timed. It is also important to know whether they have been effective, that is, if they have brought about the desired changes that will *help* the communication effort achieve its objectives. This is the role of outcome evaluation. It depends first on a clear understanding of the objectives (e.g., "to build support for a national population policy") and the indicators of success in progressing toward the objectives (e.g., a draft or final national population policy document). Sometimes unexpected positive or negative outcomes result from communication activities. In these situations, the relation between the activity and

the outcome should be explored to better understand how and why it occurred.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Once the outcomes of activities are known (e.g., the formation of a national population policy committee, a wide-spread positive change in attitudes toward family planning), the subsequent impact of these outcomes can be examined in relation to objectives. Was a national population policy actually implemented? Did the government increase its budget for family planning?

OUTCOME AND IMPACT INDICATORS

For communication activities, the indicators are those changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that the communication efforts were designed to bring about. The evaluation indicators should be *clearly specified in advance* and flow from the objectives.

For example, suppose a population policy exists on paper in Country A, but few leaders support it and most leaders are unaware of the health- or development-related benefits of reducing fertility. (Or, there is religious opposition to family planning; the medical community opposes distribution of contraceptives by non-physicians; the private sector is largely uninvolved in family planning, etc.) The communication activities will therefore focus on messages related to these findings—such as data on birthspacing and infant mortality; family planning and maternal health; and projected burdens for the health, education, employment, or

agricultural sectors under varying fertility scenarios—and can be measured against them at the end of the project. Some indicators of a successful communication effort in Country A might be:

- improvement in leaders' level of knowledge about health and economic benefits of fertility reduction (outcome);
- a positive change in leaders' attitudes about the need to implement the existing population policy (outcome) or to expand access to family planning information and services (outcome);
- leaders' use of the population information in formal or informal meetings; for memos, articles, or speeches; in interviews; for staff training; for additional workshops or seminars (outcome);
- an increase in the quantity and quality of positive media coverage of population and family planning (outcome);
- subsequent leadership-sponsored conferences on population and family planning, focusing on the information disseminated earlier to the leaders (outcome);
- direct population policy or program changes that can be attributed at least partially to the dissemination activities (impact); or
- an increase in the budget for family planning (impact).

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR DEVELOPING MEASURABLE EVALUATION INDICATORS

There are numerous sources of information that can be used when trying to identify measurable indicators. It is important to incorporate the evaluation process from the beginning by identifying measurable indicators during the early stages of planning and formulation. It is also important to make good use of existing data sources, such as national surveys. Many groups involved in population or family planning have collected and compiled data and presented it in useful ways. The following sources of information can be used, either singly or in combination, to develop measurable indicators for pre- and post-intervention assessments.

1. **National surveys.** A good way to measure the impact of communication activities is to conduct a large, representative national survey at the conclusion of the activities and compare the findings with reliable baseline data from a comparable survey conducted just prior to their beginning. However, it is unlikely that such a baseline survey of leaders' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors relevant to population policy already exists. Alternative sources of information are described below.
2. **Small sample surveys.** Much baseline information can be gathered fairly quickly and inexpensively by using questionnaires to survey a small number of leaders from representative groups—such as political, medical, or private sector leaders—on their policy-relevant knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. This information can then

shape communication activities and later be used to measure their impact.

3. **Focus groups and in-depth interviews.** These strategies are used to gain deeper understanding of audience attitudes and behaviors. In focus groups, usually 6 to 12 people with similar characteristics are interviewed simultaneously, with a moderator leading the respondents in a relatively free discussion about the topic. There are rigorous steps a researcher should take to ensure that the focus group results are reliable. In-depth interviews conducted before and after the communication effort provide very detailed information about the reasons why respondents hold specific attitudes or have certain behaviors. These interviews are usually conducted by a trained researcher and can last several hours. A sufficiently large and representative sample will maximize the usefulness of these qualitative measures.
4. **Panel study.** This technique uses an advisory panel of interested representatives of key leadership groups as a resource throughout the communication effort. This group (usually 10 to 20 individuals) can provide baseline information on the indicators of interest as well as an assessment of the success of the effort. This occurs over time. Panel studies convene formally, at specific points during the communication effort (e.g., at the inception, mid-point, and conclusion). In addition, the panel can pretest and review materials and suggest corrections and new directions.

5. **“Informed contacts.”** This method of gathering information is different from an in-depth interview in that the contacts are usually interviewed on a regular basis, but more briefly. Contacts should be knowledgeable people working on population, reproductive health, and family planning issues, such as representatives of government, nongovernmental organizations, and donors (USMID, World Bank, UNFPA, and others). In addition to lending their expertise, such people are a resource that can be used to guide and assess actions throughout the life of the activity. Keeping records of these in-person or telephone interviews can help document the progress of the activity.

6. **Media review.** If one of the purposes of communication activities is to increase coverage and quality of population and family planning information in the media, a baseline assessment of such coverage can be conducted by reviewing copies of the last six months' issues of the major newspaper. The same can be done with broadcast transcripts. Similarly, the number and kind of references to or inclusion of population topics in public documents and speeches can be analyzed as baseline data. These types of publications can be reviewed again at a later point in time to measure changes in coverage.

A more rigorous approach for assessing long-term impact would be to conduct a content analysis. A researcher defines a unit of analysis (what to count) that represents the communication message or issue. Then the unit of analysis is counted in

a predetermined source (such as a newspaper, magazine, television program, billboards) at specific points in time (e.g., at the communication activity launch and ending), or over time. Content analysis provides a way to systematically analyze text by categorizing the relevant communication message, in order to measure how often the message or issue is addressed. Most developing countries do not have extensive or comprehensive media to analyze. It is possible, however, to adapt content analysis to the environment in which the communication plan is developed.

7. **Administrative or political data.** National, regional or local service data relating to family planning or maternal child health, clinics, and budget allocations, if reliably collected, can be a good source of information for developing indicators, and for tracking budget and other resource allocations. A review of government policies and regulatory documents can also be used to measure change.
8. **Requests for information.** An often overlooked indicator of progress is increased demand for information following earlier communication activities. If, after the planned number of information activities, a significant number of high-level individuals and key institutions request more presentations, workshops, and materials, this demand is a legitimate indicator of increased interest—a necessary condition for positive attitudinal and behavioral change. The important thing is to keep careful records of the “excess” demand. (See *The Population Impact*

Project of Ghana: Reaching Out to Policymakers for a case history of an information dissemination project illustrating this kind of success.)

Summary guidelines for evaluating communication activities are presented on the following page.

EVALUATING COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES: SUMMARY GUIDELINES

1. REVIEW THE COMMUNICATION PLAN

(written document that describes the proposed activities, timelines, budget, etc.)

- x number of beneficiaries received messages; or
- mechanisms for evaluation and follow-up established and implemented (x interviews completed, bounceback questionnaires sent, etc.).

2. PLAN FOR EACH TYPE OF EVALUATION

(performance, outcome, or impact)

Examples of outcome indicators:

3. IDENTIFY SOURCES OF INFORMATION TO CONSTRUCT MEASURABLE INDICATORS

(national surveys, small sample surveys, focus groups, panel studies, informed contacts, media review, administrative data, requests for information)

- demonstrated support for population policies by key national and departmental decisionmakers as evidenced by:

a) positive statements in public speeches;

b) actions which facilitate implementation of policy objectives (e.g., population policy objectives incorporated into national five-year plan, etc.);

4. SELECT APPROPRIATE AND MEASURABLE INDICATORS

Examples of performance indicators (outputs):

- communication objectives established;
- appropriate target audience selected and researched;
- messages clearly linked to population policy issues most relevant for each different target audience;
- most appropriate source(s), communication channels, and formats selected;
- messages pretested by selected recipients from each target audience;
- x number and type of communications/messages produced (e.g., x posters, x brochures, x wall charts);

- follow-up interviews with x number of message recipients indicate awareness of population issues, use of data in planning exercises, etc.; or

- increase in coverage and accuracy of population issues in the media.

Examples of impact indicators:

- priority programs receive a greater budget allocation from FY x to FY y;

- population policy is officially adopted and/or implemented; or

- change in resource allocation and or use (e.g., more staff assigned to family planning services; clinics or community-based programs expand accessibility of services).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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A good communication plan requires careful thinking to ensure that it has clear objectives, clearly defined audiences, messages appropriate for each audience, and activities that readily lend themselves to implementation and evaluation. All of these elements are closely related. If objectives are not clear at the outset, it will be impossible to evaluate the effects of the communication effort. If the core elements of the plan are not clearly specified (i.e., objectives, audience, message, channel, and format), it will be impossible to appropriately identify what types and how many resources are required to carry it out. The plan should have a budget and should specify who is to do what and when. An evaluation strategy, including ways to pretest the communication messages, should also be described in the communication plan. This can also be used as a guide and reference for monitoring progress while the plan is being implemented.

Finally, the communication plan should be flexible to respond to changing needs. Policy audiences, in particular, are often subject to change as governments change. This underscores the need for constant attention to communication needs so that once political commitment for population and family planning policies and programs is developed, it can be effectively maintained.

APPENDIX A—POLICY COMMUNICATION CHECKLISTS

OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPING POLITICAL COMMITMENT FOR A NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY

TARGET AUDIENCES	MESSAGES	SOURCES	CHANNELS	FORMATS
<input type="checkbox"/> Top political leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Legislature/Parliament members <input type="checkbox"/> Top ministerial officials <input type="checkbox"/> Top medical personnel	Must be clear and relate to the interests of the specific audiences—for example, population policy. FP can promote:	The source of the message (the spokesperson) should ideally be a highly respected national (or at least from the region), well-known in the particular field or by that audience. For example, a highly respected:	Must be appropriate way to reach the desired audience. Mass media: <input type="checkbox"/> television <input type="checkbox"/> radio <input type="checkbox"/> print <input type="checkbox"/> electronic	Should be appropriate for audience and channel: <input type="checkbox"/> memo <input type="checkbox"/> personal letter <input type="checkbox"/> fact sheet <input type="checkbox"/> briefing paper <input type="checkbox"/> booklets (series) <input type="checkbox"/> summary reports <input type="checkbox"/> posters wall charts <input type="checkbox"/> flip chart presentations <input type="checkbox"/> storyboard presentation <input type="checkbox"/> video/film <input type="checkbox"/> slides <input type="checkbox"/> overheads <input type="checkbox"/> audio cassettes <input type="checkbox"/> ready-to-print or adapt articles <input type="checkbox"/> software programs/information files <input type="checkbox"/> population education materials <input type="checkbox"/> existing materials such as DHS summaries, case history booklets, population data sheets, etc.
IMPORTANT AUDIENCES: <input type="checkbox"/> Other health personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Managers of existing family planning (FP) programs <input type="checkbox"/> High level educators <input type="checkbox"/> Business and civic leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Media leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Women's groups <input type="checkbox"/> Religious leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Donor organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)	<input type="checkbox"/> cost savings <input type="checkbox"/> political stability <input type="checkbox"/> planning for the future <input type="checkbox"/> material well-being of the people <input type="checkbox"/> health of mothers and children <input type="checkbox"/> status of women <input type="checkbox"/> school completion <input type="checkbox"/> parental responsibility <input type="checkbox"/> protection of the environment <input type="checkbox"/> a stronger economy	<input type="checkbox"/> doctor for addressing health leaders <input type="checkbox"/> professional/political woman to address women's groups or the legislature on MCH benefits of FP <input type="checkbox"/> professor to write booklet on population and development <input type="checkbox"/> popular radio/TV personality for broadcasts	Interpersonal: <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> hand delivery <input type="checkbox"/> workshop <input type="checkbox"/> conference <input type="checkbox"/> seminars	

OBJECTIVE: DEVELOPING NATIONAL PLANS FOR EXPANDING FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

TARGET AUDIENCES	MESSAGES	SOURCES	CHANNELS	TOOLS & FORMATS
<p>Top decision makers in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Planning/Finance <input type="checkbox"/> National Family Planning Program <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector health/FP providers <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative Committee on health/FP <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmaceutical corporations <input type="checkbox"/> Health lobbyists 	<p>Must be clear and relate to the interests of the specific audience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> rapid rise in number of women ages 15-49, anticipated rise in contraceptive prevalence; thus projected large numbers of FP clients <input type="checkbox"/> reliable estimates of costs to meet future demand can be made <input type="checkbox"/> current and projected public budgets not adequate for expected demand <input type="checkbox"/> the use of strategic planning can help meet demand by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> —increasing public spending —utilizing public resources more effectively (reducing costs, targeting, improving method and source mix, quality control, etc.) —recovering costs through appropriate user fees —mobilizing private sector resources 	<p>The source of the message (the spokesperson) should ideally be a highly respected national (or at least from the region), well-known in the particular field or by that audience. For example, a highly respected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> economist <input type="checkbox"/> chief planner <input type="checkbox"/> business leader <input type="checkbox"/> population/FP leader <input type="checkbox"/> academic 	<p>Must be appropriate way to reach the desired audience.</p> <p>Mass media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> television <input type="checkbox"/> radio <input type="checkbox"/> print <input type="checkbox"/> electronic <p>Interpersonal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> hand delivery <input type="checkbox"/> workshop <input type="checkbox"/> conference <input type="checkbox"/> seminars 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> computer models <input type="checkbox"/> case histories <p>Presented via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> software/PC <input type="checkbox"/> storyboard <input type="checkbox"/> slides <input type="checkbox"/> overheads <input type="checkbox"/> manuals <input type="checkbox"/> memos/personal letters (to top leaders) <input type="checkbox"/> briefing papers/research summaries <input type="checkbox"/> booklets <input type="checkbox"/> fact sheets <input type="checkbox"/> worksheets/exercises <input type="checkbox"/> wall charts <input type="checkbox"/> press releases <input type="checkbox"/> ready-to-adapt news articles
<p>IMPORTANT AUDIENCES</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Mid-level planners/managers, technical staff <input type="checkbox"/> FP mid-level managers/staff <input type="checkbox"/> Other legislators <input type="checkbox"/> Civic leaders, including women's groups <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> University researchers <input type="checkbox"/> Donor organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant NGOs 				

OBJECTIVE: INCREASING PUBLIC SECTOR ALLOCATIONS TO FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

TARGET AUDIENCES	MESSAGES	SOURCES	CHANNELS	TOOLS & FORMATS
<p>Top decision makers in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Planning/ Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Government (political) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Health <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Ministries of Housing and Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Education <input type="checkbox"/> FP Program 	<p>Must be clear and re-relate to the interests of the specific audience—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> investments in FP save costs in health, education, labor, housing, and other sectors later <input type="checkbox"/> investments in FP can reduce MCH costs relatively soon <input type="checkbox"/> current FP expenditures can be estimated, both in total and for various delivery strategies and methods <input type="checkbox"/> current FP expenditures can be used more efficiently <input type="checkbox"/> realistic user fees for appropriate clients can be established 	<p>The source of the message (the spokesperson) should ideally be a highly respected national (or at least from the region), well-known in the particular field or by that audience. For example, a highly respected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> senior staff member of the Ministry of Health <input type="checkbox"/> chief planner <input type="checkbox"/> FP leader <input type="checkbox"/> academic/researcher <input type="checkbox"/> cabinet member/ ministers 	<p>Must be appropriate way to reach the desired audience.</p> <p>Mass media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> television <input type="checkbox"/> radio <input type="checkbox"/> print <input type="checkbox"/> electronic <p>Interpersonal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> hand delivery <input type="checkbox"/> workshop <input type="checkbox"/> conference <input type="checkbox"/> seminars 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> benefit-cost analyses <input type="checkbox"/> cost-effectiveness analyses <input type="checkbox"/> FP costing analyses <input type="checkbox"/> contraceptive market models <input type="checkbox"/> cost recovery analyses <input type="checkbox"/> case histories <p>Presented via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> overheads <input type="checkbox"/> manuals (for technical staff) <input type="checkbox"/> storyboard <input type="checkbox"/> briefing papers <input type="checkbox"/> booklets <input type="checkbox"/> software/PC <input type="checkbox"/> executive summaries <input type="checkbox"/> slides <input type="checkbox"/> wall charts <input type="checkbox"/> press releases <input type="checkbox"/> ready-to-adapt articles
<p>IMPORTANT AUDIENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FP program managers <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant academics/ research institutes <input type="checkbox"/> Civic groups concerned with above sectors <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Donor organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant NGOs 				

OBJECTIVE: PROMOTING LEGAL AND REGULATORY REFORM TO FACILITATE FAMILY PLANNING SERVICE DELIVERY

TARGET AUDIENCES	MESSAGES	SOURCES	CHANNELS	TOOLS & FORMATS
<p>Top decision makers in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Planning/ Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Government (political) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Health <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Trade and Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> National FP Program <input type="checkbox"/> Public health community <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector MDs and nurse/midwives; TBAs/healers <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacists and other commercial FP distributors and manufacturers <input type="checkbox"/> Private hospitals/clinics <input type="checkbox"/> Other retailers <input type="checkbox"/> Law-making bodies 	<p>Must be clear and relate to the interests of the specific audience—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> all WHO approved FP methods can be safely used in this country <input type="checkbox"/> most methods can be dispensed by nonphysicians with equal safety <input type="checkbox"/> FP clients should be able to choose from a wide range of methods after adequate counseling <input type="checkbox"/> culturally appropriate IEC campaigns give potential clients information needed to make FP decisions <input type="checkbox"/> private physicians and nurses can increase access to FP and reduce government burden <input type="checkbox"/> legal, regulatory, and pricing reforms can positively affect the above issues 	<p>The source of the message (the spokesperson) should ideally be a highly respected national (or at least from the region), well-known in the particular field or by that audience. For example, a highly respected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> physician <input type="checkbox"/> government leader <input type="checkbox"/> lawyer/judge <input type="checkbox"/> trade/commerce expert <input type="checkbox"/> FP leader <input type="checkbox"/> economist/financial analyst <input type="checkbox"/> ministerial technical expert 	<p>Must be appropriate way to reach the desired audience.</p> <p>Mass media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> television <input type="checkbox"/> radio <input type="checkbox"/> print <input type="checkbox"/> electronic <p>Interpersonal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> hand delivery <input type="checkbox"/> workshop <input type="checkbox"/> conference <input type="checkbox"/> seminars 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> checklist for examining laws and regulations affecting FP <input type="checkbox"/> compendia of relevant laws and regulations <input type="checkbox"/> contraceptive market models <input type="checkbox"/> contraceptive supply/demand analyses <input type="checkbox"/> case histories of regulatory reform <p>Presented via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> overheads <input type="checkbox"/> slides <input type="checkbox"/> manuals (for technical staff) <input type="checkbox"/> storyboard <input type="checkbox"/> summary reports <input type="checkbox"/> booklets <input type="checkbox"/> press releases and news articles <input type="checkbox"/> existing materials
<p>IMPORTANT AUDIENCES</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Religious leaders <input type="checkbox"/> Broadcasters <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper editors <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising executives <input type="checkbox"/> Women's groups (re: spousal consent, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Donor organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant NGOs <input type="checkbox"/> Legal associations 				

OBJECTIVE: INCREASING PRIVATE SECTOR RESOURCES FOR FAMILY PLANNING

TARGET AUDIENCES	MESSAGES	SOURCES	CHANNELS	TOOLS & FORMATS
<p>Top decision makers in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Regional social security organizations <input type="checkbox"/> National social security institutions (top managers, medical directors) <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Health <input type="checkbox"/> Health insurance groups <input type="checkbox"/> Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperatives, community groups, and NGOs <input type="checkbox"/> Large national corporations 	<p>Must be clear and re-relate to the interests of the specific audience—for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FP promotes better health of mothers and children <input type="checkbox"/> FP saves costs, particularly for MCH care <input type="checkbox"/> FP provides a tangible benefit for clients at little or no cost <input type="checkbox"/> appropriate goals, budgets, and plans for FP can be developed and implemented <input type="checkbox"/> FP offered in the workplace improves productivity 	<p>Ideally a highly respected national or regional leader. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> representative of social security institution from other country which has successfully included FP <input type="checkbox"/> convinced representative of this country's national or regional social security institute <input type="checkbox"/> health/financing expert <input type="checkbox"/> manager or medical director of private sector health provider <input type="checkbox"/> representative of HMO/NGO <input type="checkbox"/> government health leader <input type="checkbox"/> representative of pharmacists' association <input type="checkbox"/> representative of other important audiences <input type="checkbox"/> labor union leader 	<p>Must be appropriate way to reach the desired audience.</p> <p>Mass media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> television <input type="checkbox"/> radio <input type="checkbox"/> print <input type="checkbox"/> electronic <p>Interpersonal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> face-to-face <input type="checkbox"/> hand delivery <input type="checkbox"/> workshop <input type="checkbox"/> conference <input type="checkbox"/> seminars 	<p>Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> benefit-cost analyses <input type="checkbox"/> FP cost analyses <input type="checkbox"/> demand analyses <input type="checkbox"/> research summaries on benefits of FP for MCH <input type="checkbox"/> case histories of successful inclusion of FP in social security, insurance, and other private providers <p>Presented via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> storyboard <input type="checkbox"/> overheads <input type="checkbox"/> slides/videos <input type="checkbox"/> briefing papers/fact sheets <input type="checkbox"/> executive summaries <input type="checkbox"/> booklets <input type="checkbox"/> chartbooks <input type="checkbox"/> software/PC <input type="checkbox"/> mini-curriculum for health course <input type="checkbox"/> ready-to-adapt news articles/press releases <input type="checkbox"/> existing materials
<p>IMPORTANT AUDIENCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacists' association <input type="checkbox"/> Private health care providers <input type="checkbox"/> Labor unions <input type="checkbox"/> Women's groups <input type="checkbox"/> Civic groups <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Donor organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant NGOs 				

APPENDIX B—USING VISUAL AIDS TO MAKE DYNAMIC PRESENTATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

Policy information is often most effectively conveyed to high-level leaders in an oral presentation. Written information may be shelved and never read. An oral presentation has the advantage of immediacy: the audience can directly debate the issue or ask for clarification. Moreover, during an oral presentation the message can be communicated through both the spoken word and through visual material. Visual aids, particularly computer graphics and slides, often transform a good presentation into a dynamic one. Visual aids can help an oral presentation in three ways.

- **Visual aids help the audience follow the presentation.** An outline of the points to be covered, which is presented again as each point is introduced, lets the audience follow the progress of the presentation.
- **Visual aids help the audience understand the message.** A complicated relationship is clarified with a flow chart; a trend in data is illustrated by a bar graph.
- **Visual aids make the presentation more attractive.** The audience may pay more attention, and be more likely to remember the speaker's message.

These points are discussed in more detail below.

1. Help the audience follow the presentation

The audience will find it much easier to follow the progress of a presentation if it is initially provided with and kept abreast of the outline. It is easier for the audience to grasp the items to be covered if they are presented visually. The speaker comes back to the list of items to show the audience which point was just completed, and which topic will be discussed next. The outline will also identify the end of the presentation, and avoid a potentially awkward moment when the audience and speaker are both silent, each expecting the other to speak.

2. Help the audience understand the message

Graphs and charts often greatly clarify complicated ideas. Bar charts, pie charts, line graphs, and a range of other graphics can clearly show relationships that are complicated to explain with words. Flow charts that show how variables affect each other clarify a chain of events that would be difficult to follow with words. Organigrams allow the audience to grasp an overall arrangement that is typically difficult to explain. Use of graphics helps the speaker to be clear about what is being said.

Text can also be used to explain concepts. If the speaker has shown graphs of the influence of certain factors (for example, what inputs did or did not improve a program's performance), it is helpful to present a word list with columns titled "improved performance" and "did not improve performance." As a general rule, there should be at least three screens of words for each screen of data or graphics.

Consistency in design of the screens enhances understanding. Variables that are presented repeatedly should use a consistent set of symbols, or a consistent color scheme. For example, if the presentation is about two population projections, the high projection line may always be drawn as dots, and the low projection line may always be drawn as dashes. If the presentation is about urban and rural differences, use the same color for urban data throughout the presentation, and use another color consistently for rural data. When numbers or labels are added to the lines or bars of a graph, continue to use the same color scheme.

Presentations with slides have a great advantage: the speaker can add a picture, and thus add "a thousand words." The basic point of a presentation is conveyed with a picture. If the speaker wants to say that contraceptive use is low because of inadequate service delivery, he or she might show a picture of a clinic with long waiting lines. Pictures provide further anecdotal evidence to support the speaker's statements. Pictures also help the audience visualize the context. In discussing the effectiveness of a radio campaign for oral rehydration therapy, the speaker might show a picture of a mother giving her sick child a sugar-salt solution. Pictures linger in thoughts, and make the memory of the presentation last.

3. Make the presentation more attractive

Polished, colorful graphics greatly enhance a presentation; conversely, sloppy graphics can undermine a presentation. As with the script, it is important that everything on the screen be correct. Mislabeled graphs, slides inserted backwards, and spelling errors distract the

audience, and reduce the speaker's credibility. All materials need to be carefully proofread.

Consistency in design of the screens makes the presentation appear more polished and professional. The presenter should use only one or two type fonts throughout, use the same colors for titles or keyword charts, choose between having all three-dimensional or all two-dimensional graphs (which are easier to read and understand), use the same background color on all screens, use the same number of decimal points, and repeat the same type of screen movement during similar screen sequences.

Pictures enhance the appeal of the presentation. Slide presentations have a particular advantage in this respect, but computer graphic presentations also sometimes include drawings of people or places. Symbols can be used to mark bullets or points on a chart.

USING VISUAL AIDS: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Visual aids should reinforce the speaker; the speaker should not be peripheral, annotating the screens. Weak speakers will often show a visual aid, and stand back silently, expecting the audience to understand. To avoid this situation, the speaker should practice delivering the presentation without the visual aids.

Visual aids should support the words of the speaker. Every screen should reiterate what is being said. The audience should not hear one concept orally, while a different concept is presented visually. A speaker should present only one piece of

information at a time. If two points are illustrated at the same time, the audience may look at and think about one point, while the speaker is discussing the other point. When comparisons are being made, and it is necessary to illustrate more than one point, the presenter should build the screen exactly as the script builds the point. For example, the speaker may want to show that home visits increase the contraceptive use of rural women, but do not increase the contraceptive use of urban women. This needs to be illustrated with four bars: two bars for the contraceptive use of rural women who did or did not have a home visit, and two bars for the contraceptive use of urban women who did or did not have a home visit. It would be wise to first show a screen with only the two bars for rural women, followed by another screen that contains all four bars. Word screens should be built in the same way. For example, the speaker may want to outline the four subjects to be covered during the discussion. This can be done by showing a screen with just the title of subject one, followed by another screen showing the title of subjects one and two, etc. As each line of text is shown, the speaker should either read the text out loud, or pause silently for as long as it takes to read the text (to gauge this time the speaker reads the text silently).

The presenter should minimize the amount of information presented on each screen, and use single words instead of sentences. If a graph shows population growth over the next ten years, it might be labeled *Population* not *Size of the Population*

Estimated in the Year 1990 and Projected to the Year 2000. The bars or the line would be labeled *1990* and *2000*. Because the speaker will explain the graph with clear words, detailed captions may not be needed; however, the graph should be easily understood on its own. It is also preferable to avoid using a legend if the bars, lines, or slices of a pie chart can be labeled directly.* The audience should not have to go back and forth between the colors coded in the legend and contained in each bar or slice. If a legend must be used, it should be presented in the same arrangement as the graph. For example, if there are bars of data from left to right, the legend should be presented horizontally, with the farthest left label referring to the farthest left bar. Whenever possible a full scale should be used (e.g., use the label *5 million* instead of adding *in thousands* to the title and using the label *5,000*). Numbers should be rounded; it is rarely necessary to show more than three significant digits.

References to the graphs themselves should be avoided. Rather than saying "the short bar on the left shows the population today, the tall bar on the right shows the population in ten years," the speaker should say instead "the population will grow from four million today, to five million in ten years" and point to the bars.

Not every sentence of a presentation will need a visual aid. The presenter can take advantage of these moments to leave the screen blank and make eye contact with the audience. Throughout the pre-

* This will be especially important when the screens from a computer graphics presentation will be printed and photocopied for other applications. Colors that are easily distinguishable on a computer screen may not be easily differentiated on a black-and-white photocopy.

sentation the speaker should stand as close as possible to the screen (without blocking the view), which also maximizes eye contact. Room arrangements that force the audience to have their backs to the speaker are undesirable. A speaker may have to be at the back of the room when the projector needs to be far from the screen, and when it is necessary to work with computer equipment connected to the projector. If possible, the speaker should use a remote control to control the computer, or stretch the computer as far from the projector as possible with extension cords. It is preferable to be somewhat toward the front of the room, so that at least some of the audience has eye contact.

TYPES OF VISUAL AIDS

Most graphics are now computer-generated. These graphs can be printed and photocopied onto overhead transparencies, and used as conventional overheads. Alternatively, the graphs can be presented with screen movement using a computer program, or they can be made into slides. In situations where it is not possible to generate graphic displays via computer, effective use of posters or flowcharts also enhance an oral presentation. These alternatives are described below.

➤ **Computer Graphics "Electronic Slide Shows"**

StoryBoard, ShowPartner, Power Point, and Harvard Graphics are examples of computer programs that make electronic slide shows. These programs have basically two working environments. In one environment the user makes graphs, organigrams, word charts, simple designs, and whatever needs to be shown as a screen. In the other environment the user

lists all the screens to be shown, and determines how the screens will be presented (e.g., the new screen may gradually blend onto the screen, or the new screen may appear to push the old screen away). The story can be saved and run from one diskette that does not need to contain the whole software program. This show is presented on a color monitor, or projected with special video equipment. The disadvantage of this format is that it requires a lot of equipment at each presentation. The advantage is that the presentation can be immediately changed using the computer.

➤ **Slides**

It is possible to make a slide of any computer screen, if a camera has been attached to the computer (special equipment is required for this). The user prepares the required screen, takes a picture, and submits the film for regular processing. If the user does not have this special equipment, it is possible to send the diskette to a company that does.

Slides have two main advantages. One advantage is that slide projectors are frequently available, so it is not necessary for the speaker to transport a lot of equipment. This also means that the presentation can be easily delivered by others. Numerous sets of slides can be made and distributed to increase the chance that the presentation will be delivered again. A good presentation will be used repeatedly. People are often called upon to speak at conferences or staff meetings. If they have a good slide presentation and script on hand, they will be likely to use them. The second advantage is that photographs can be inserted into the presentation, which greatly enhances its appeal. The main

disadvantage of slides is that it takes at least 24 hours to develop the film, so modifications cannot be made quickly.

► **Handmade Visual Aids**

In situations where electronic equipment used to produce visual aids is unavailable, handmade aids are good substitutes. Posterboards and flip charts are prepared in advance, using the same elements of good design described for computer-generated graphics. Handmade aids still have the potential to improve an oral presentation in the same way as electronic visual aids. Lack of equipment should not discourage a presenter from manually designing materials to accompany a presentation.

► **Handouts**

To help the audience remember the important points of a presentation, it is a good idea to provide a handout. A one-page handout or brochure that summarizes the main points is useful. This is appropriate for high-level audiences and for technical audiences to help them articulate the main points in later conversations. Additionally, one can distribute a written version of the entire visual presentation by printing each screen with the associated script written below on the same page. It is easiest for the reader if the screens are interspersed with the script, rather than included at the end of pages of text.

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