

Media's role in promoting child family health in the Philippines

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1989

Iriarte, R. (1989). Media's role in promoting child family health in the Philippines. In Seminar on Media and Child Family Health : Singapore, February 20-22, 1989. Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre.

<https://hdl.handle.net/10356/85956>

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In The Philippines**

By

R Iriarte

MEDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING CHILD/ FAMILY HEALTH IN THE PHILIPPINES

By: R. Iriarte

INTRODUCTION:

During the Third International Symposium on Public Health in Asia and the Pacific Region held at Jakarta, Indonesia on Dec. 4 - 8, 1988, Mr. Vicente G. Tirol of the Press Foundation of Asia in cooperation with Unicef revealed to the participants of the efforts of the Press and Media in the promotion of Child/ Family Health in the Philippines. He revealed the encouraging experiences and the results of the efforts of the Press and Media in Tacloban City and Eastern Visayas Region in Central Philippines. In 1986 the immunization stood at a normal 50%. In 1988 after the workshops and echo seminars and campaign the committee on child survival, which I was the Vice Chairman it shot up to 80 - 90%.

Mr. Tirol disclosed to them on what happened in the Philippines after the Mass Media campaign. What was the result and who were the ones involved.

But he only mentioned this Philippine experience as one of the projects of PFA/Unicef in Asia South Asia and SouthEast Asia (such countries as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and the South Pacific.)

I will present to you my testimonial on that Philippine Experience, the strategies and details.

MEDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING CHILD/
FAMILY HEALTH IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Ralph M. Iriarte
Singapore, February 20 - 22, 1989

On Dec. 3 - 5, 1986, The United Nations Childrens Fund and the Press Foundation of Asia conducted in the Eastern Visayas (Tacloban City) Media Round Table on child Survival and Development.

Three groups of participants came to attend the workshop namely:

Group I - Government Organizations

Group II - Media

Group III- Non-government Organizations

Identified health problems in 1986 were as follows: Region VIII

Problem	Affected Group
Tuberculosis	Children and Adult
Measless	Children
Malnutrition	Children
Dysentery	Children
Pneumonia	Children
Skin deseases	Children & Adult
Schistosomiasis	Children & Adult
Hepatitis	Children & Adult
Diarrhea	Children & Adult
Amoebiasis	Children
Polio	Children

These were the problems perceived by the Media.

The Government Statistics were as follows:

The third Degree Malnutrition in 1984 was 2.4 while in 1985 was 3.3. Malnutrition was the 5th cause of death among children. No. 1 was pneumonia. The government allotted ₱ 1 million per province for medicines and 70% of this go to children. A province

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has an average population of 500,000 and the Region VIII has 2,799,534 people. It is composed of 5 provinces (1986).

In 1985 the crude birth rate was 17.01 per 1,000; the crude death rate was 5.5 per 1,000; the infant (1 year below) mortality was 43.3 and the maternal mortality was 1.5 per 1000.

Details in the infant mortality were: (per 1000) (1986)

Pneumonia	-	-	19.3
Diarhea	-	-	5
Pretonitis	-	-	2.2
Bronchitis	-	-	1.8
Malnutrition	-	-	1.5

The Malnutrition picture was: (1986)

60% and below	-	Severe
60 - 75%	-	2nd degree
75 - 92%	-	1st degree

The immunization program of the government in 1986 were:
DPT (Difteria, Pertussis Tetanus) polio, measles, BCG or
anti - TB.

Statistic on Breast feeding in 1986 was:

162%	for Southern Leyte Province
107%	for Eastern Samar Province
5%	for Tacloban City

With this background the following workshop questions were made:

1. How can media help us promote CSD? Which media and what format would be most useful in promoting CSD?
2. Have we worked with media on CSD or in other development-oriented activities? What was our experience on the collaboration? What factors helped to make the collaboration possible? What problems, if any, stood in, the way of fruitful collaboration?

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3. What can we do from our own end, and with our existing resources, to solve these problems?
4. What kind of support/assistance can we extend to media to help them a better work of promoting CSD?
5. What can we do together to solve these problems?
What can we do with outside support?
6. What can we do together to take advantage of these opportunities?
What can we ~~do~~ with outside support?

The Recommendations were:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish formal linkages between the media and the agencies involved in the CSD program specifically through:
 - a) regular dialogues and seminars,
 - b) systematic dissemination of the latest information on CSD activities, programs, researches on the part of the agencies,
 - c) helping provide more air time or column inches on the part of media practitioners.
2. Agencies involved in CSD program should be more accessible to the media. A competent and properly trained public information officer should handle the preparation/dissemination of information. In the absence of a PIO, a liaison officer who knows how to deal with media, should be assigned this task.
3. Conduct training seminars for agencies supporting CSD, in the production of information materials for dissemination to the broadcast and print media.
4. Create echo seminars for other media practitioners.
5. Agencies like Ministry of Health (as the leading agency), the Philippine Information Agency and even the Ministry of Education and Culture and Sports (MECS) should undertake the production of relevant information about CSD.

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These communication materials (e.g. visual-aids, brochures, posters, comics, leaflets, etc.) preferably in the dialect of the target audience should be distributed not only to the media but should also reach the grassroots level.

6. Monitor and gather feedback on CSD programs and activities with MOH taking the lead, assisted by NGOS.
7. Create a CSD committee/Task Force with the specific task of looking into the communication aspects of the program. This could spin off into a foundation later on.
8. Integrate and organize all the agencies involved with CSD program which should include the media, government and non-government people such as MOH (as the lead agency), POPCOM, PCF, MSSD, MECS, with the help of UNICEF and Press Foundation of Asia, Civic organization like the Rotary, Inner Wheel club, media society particularly pediatricians should also be included together with archdiocesan and social action groups. This is envisioned to spin off into a foundation later on.
9. Tap international agencies like UNICEF and WHO for funding purposes so that scope of CSD program and its dissemination could be widened.
10. For incentives, give citations and awards to deserving agencies and groups who have greatly helped promote the cause of CSD.

With these recommendations, the participants in the workshop elected its officers as follows: Chairman - Regional Director
Luis Montero - representing
the Government Sector

Three Vice Chairman -

Ralph Iriarte - representing the print media

Danny Genotiva - representing the broadcast media Radio
Station DYVL

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Fidel Dagami - representing the non-government organization (The Giants) a civic club in Palo, Leyte.

It was purposely done to elect the Regional Director of the Department of Health as Chairman so that the resources of the Department of Health can be used by the CSD committee.

Every month thereafter an echoworkshop was made in the five capitals of the 5 provinces of Eastern Visayas such places as Maasin, Southern Leyte, Catarman, Northern Samar, Borongan, Eastern Samar, and Catbalogan, Western Samar.

The participants and organizers (CSD Committee) did not spend much because the transportation used came from the Department of Health. The participants slept on the bed for patients as they were housed in hospitals, and ate the food given to patients and the echo-Seminar workshop was itself held at the hospital hall. Government Organizations such as the Department of Health, non government organizations such as the religious groups (MAKAPAWA) Catholic Church) civic clubs (Lions, Rotary, Jaycees, Kiwanis) and social clubs (Giants) and the third group the media or press (Radio, TV & Print Media) had to experience these conditions in order to fulfil the objectives of the campaign on child Survival & Development.

The workshop was the first step towards collaboration among the Government Organizations, Non-government Organizations and the Media.

After the workshop, the committees on child Survival & Development immediately started to work on the recommendations, such as regular dialogues and seminars; systematic dissemination of the latest information on CSD activities, programs, researches specifically on Growth Monitoring, Oral rehydration; Breast feeding and Immunization (GOBI); helping provide more airtime, and print Spaces on the part of the media practitioners (Samples Exhibits A)

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After two years of this campaign, we made the following assessments and analysis:

These assessments were done during the CSD Second Conference wherein the participants not only came from central Philippines but also from Northern Philippines (Luzon) and Southern Philippines (Mindanao)

Here is the Story of the Government worker Mrs. Honorata C. Chan of the Department of Health:

The mothers already knew the antigens to be given because there is an assembly every now and then. These are the small groups of 10 - 15. They knew the site where the immunization will take place because of the media. They already knew how many injections to complete the immunization, The ages of the children to be immunized, and the pregnant mothers.

The Barangay Health Workers were indigenous volunteers. They were in charge of the orderliness of the center. The same also with the Barangay Nutrition scholar (BNS). They made the listing of the mothers and the follow-up of instructions. Sometimes they answer questions from mothers and when they cannot answer them, they refer the question to the personnel of the City Health Office. Question were on Growth Monitoring, Oral Rehydration, Breast feeding & Immunizations and Family Planning. Since the Rotary Club has a Polio plus program, they also provided the 8 teams with food and snacks, transportation and incidental expenses. The City Health Office provided the anti- pyretics medicines. The Regional Health Office provided the following:

For the 1 and 1/2 month children simultaneously they were given DPT and OPT (antigens for Diphtheria pertussis and Tetanus and Oral Polio Vaccine) For the 9 months old, antigens given were for measles and TB (BCG vaccine). For the pregnant mothers they were given tetanus toxoid.

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In the Siren District a masterlist was made and resulted in 186 children and 29 mothers. These 186 were 0 - 12 year old children.

The progress are indicated in the 5 Charts (Exhibits B, C, D, E, F).

On Health Education especially nutrition and mothercraft, the mothers are taught to prepare the food and feed their children at the center and they continue these at home.

On the Question: What do you see to be the role of the media in promoting child Survival and development? Do you see the media fulfilling these roles?

Answer: The Radio and TV and Print helped a lot especially when information regarding the difference between a healthy and a malnourished mother and also information of mothers going to immunization centers and showing also the benefits of a sanitary living conditions, wholesome environment, the right use of water sealed toilets and good health habits. They published and aired the immunization schedules and the benefits and advantages of immunization and GOBI.

On the Question: What can the Mass Media do to help the health and nutrition of children?

Answer: There must be continuous jingle on health and nutrition and GOBI and they must be timely when mothers are preparing food and during mealtimes. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

A Barangay Health Worker Anacorita Baño and her Husband the Community leader, since he was the Barangay Leader, related the same experiences regarding the role of the media in the successful program Siren District.

A mother Leah Vinas related also her experiences on the role of the Media. She said that she became aware of the

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immunizations and was reminded every now and then of the schedules by Radio and TV: (Radio crew were at the center and aired live the immunization. TV crew also covered the drive).

She said that her sources of information on health and nutrition were the, BHW, BNS, Midwives in the area and the radio and TV.

She said she knew Oresol, breast feeding, immunization and growth Monitoring from BHW, BNS, Midwives and radio and TV.

She said she listen to radio and watch TV from neighbor. She even showed the accomplished growth Monitoring chart.

Representatives of the Non-government organizations namely C_elito Yap of the Rotary Club of Tacloban and Charlie Avila of the Leyte Economic Foundation and Mayor of Tanauan, Leyte when asked:

Has there been any significant change in the health situation of the children in the area? The answers were both yes. To what can you attribute the change? Ans: Both answered education brought up this change. Question: What are your sources of information about child health and nutrition? Answer: Radio. How adequate are these? There must be a radio program in the early morning where the Barangay folks are listening maybe 5:00 A.M. before they go to their farms and work.

With these Tacloban City and Eastern Visayas, Philippines model, we held the Second Workshop last Nov. 20 - 23, 1988 and invited the Press and Radio and TV (Media) people from other regions in the Philippines so that they can learn from our experiences. Participants were brought to Siren District and they asked the Mothers and Parents, the Non-government Organization (Rotary) th Barangay Health Workers (BHW) the Community leaders (Mr.Baeño) the government representative working in the area (Dr. Hermilo Quintero and Mrs. Honorata Chan) and the media (Ralph Iriarte, Danny Genotiva, Babes Custodio, Guz Arnaiz)

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Leah Vinas, a 25-year-old mother, married to Edmundo Vinas, a truckhelper, and having two children, ages 2 and 3 years old, said that all her children were already immunized. That she first heard of the immunization over the radio and afterwards they were trained by the Barangay Health Worker named Encarnacion Tiozon of Barangay 39-A(Village) Siren District, Tacloban City.

Beatriz Corpin, another mother of Siren District, Tacloban City, married to Marcelo Corpin Sr. said that she is breastfeeding her 6-month-old child named Marcelo Corpin Jr. She said that she knew about breastfeeding from the radio. She said that on Feb. 4, 1989 there will be immunization in their district and she will have her child Marcelo Corpin Jr. immunized. She said she heard this immunization drive over the radio. On Feb 4, 1989 there will be 25 children ages 0-12 years old, who will be immunized in Siren District, Tacloban City. They will be immunized from Diptheria, Pertussis, Tetanus(DPT) and Polio(Oral Polio Vaccine(OPV)).

Breastfeeding in Tacloban City in 1986 was 5% and now it is steadily increasing due to education and positive information on the advantages and benefits of breastfeeding.

In 1986 there were 2,084 children or 76.4% who were immunized in Tacloban City. In 1987 it rose to 2,774 or 79.4 % and in the year 1988 there were 2,904 children immunized against DPT and polio or percentagewise, it was 84.7 percent. This was due to the information and education drive of the CSD or Child Survival and Development Committee composed of the government health workers, the media and the non-government organizations such as the Rotary Club of Tacloban City.

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With this experience, I hope that we may share this with you, and in the interaction, I can also bring back to the Philippines, Your experiences that may augment or enrich our collaboration on child survival and development.

I may say, lastly, that the key words are: partnership, convergence, confluence, cooperations, collaboration, awareness, commitment, sincerity and love and acceptance the feeling of joy and altruism in child survival and Development.

Thank you.