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Communication On Child Welfare
(The Indonesian Experience)

By

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ten years ago, when The Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation was founded, there were many other charity foundations and social organizations working in the field to improve and helping children in their rehabilitation center or dorm. These children are victims of conditions caused by health, family, social, cultural and other problems.

While the other organizations continuing their fruitfull and dedicative effort, The Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation come with a question: Could we do something to improve these situations? Could we create circumstances that enable us to prepare the coming of the new generations of Indonesian, healthy in body and mind and ready to challenge the world of tomorrow? This question had triggered many others and the foundation has responded them with programmes and activities that reflect our vision about what we have to do for the children today and in the future.

We realized that the issues we challenged are multi-faceted and imposed many problems and obstacles. They are too huge to deal with by only one organization. And, in the 10 years experience we learn that the key to answer the problems and to overcome these obstacles are communications.

With this understanding, we have been working in several activities and pilot projects which are actually communication programmes in nature. We have tried to communicate with people, parents, governments, decission makers, international bodies and other child welfare organizations.
Through publications, library, information and document center, seminars, workshops and conferences on national levels. We work in cooperations with mass-media and publication houses and our information center is opened for the media, students, professionals, researchers, individuals and other child welfare organizations.

We also published quarterly journal, report and books and we had piloted the publication of family monthly magazine 'balita' (the under-fives).

In spite of all the efforts, we know that there are more things to be done, in term of the message we are trying to carry on, the targets we aim and the right means of communications we use for a particular purpose.

To give you a picture of some specific situations that conditioned any communication attempt in Indonesia, let us present you with some facts and numbers.

II. A PROFILE OF COMMUNICATION IN INDONESIA

A. Geography

Indonesia, a member of ASEAN, a regional organization in South East Asia, is the fifth populous country in the world. It consists of 13,667 islands, but only 9000 are inhabited. A population of about 170 million is not distributed evenly. Therefore the population density varies greatly from area to area, from 19-690 per square kilometer. Of the five biggest islands, Java Madura are the most populated. 62% of the total population live on those two islands, which only comprise 7% of the total land area. Indonesia is also often called a country of waterways as it is surrounded by seas, straits and crossed by rivers. The land area compared to the waterways stands 2 to 3.
Because of the concentration of people in Java priority for the main activities are given to this island for the smooth running of programmes. In general the main ways of transportation by road, water and air. Several modern ways of communication are at present being used for all kinds of business, like sending printed media, especially newspapers, by air transport to the provinces. On the other hand many people are still using the traditional way of communication, especially in remote areas where roads are not yet available and people are still using boats on the river, or just do everything on foot.

3. Communication media

Any kind of media is expected to be able to perform the role of dynamisation, motivator and at the same time a social stabilisator. There are different kinds of mass media, printed as well as electronics.

Printed Media

The rural press program, popularly called "Koran Masuk Desa" (KMD)-- newspapers circulating in villages which also use the local languages and "Surat Kabar Untuk Desa" (SKUD)-- newspaper for villages-- has been introduced and encouraged by the government. In 1987/1988, the total number of newspaper circulating and entering the rural areas was 7,680,000 copies issued by 50 press publication companies. This shows a ratio of one newspaper against seven readers of elementary school graduates and up.

The circulation of press publication (Not including KMD and SKUD) in 1987/1988 reached 9,765,817 copies for each issuance, of which 3,337,301 copies were of the daily newspapers, 3,355,049 copies of the weekly newspapers, 1,340,906 copies of the weekly magazines, 1,034,824 copies of bi-weekly magazines, 671.297
copies of monthly magazines, 5000 copies of magazines published three times a month and 21,440 copies of bulletins.

Electronic media

Radio

The state's "Radio Republic Indonesia" (RRI) is the largest radio network in the country. The policy pursued by the Indonesia Radio Services (RRI) is directed to the improvement of broadcasting quality and is still steadily oriented to the rural communities, particularly to improve the quality of the groups of the rural broadcasting listeners, which constitute a part of the Groups of listeners, viewers and readers (LVR Groups/ KLOMPENCAPIR). There are 60,755 LVR Groups throughout Indonesia. LVR Groups play an important role in the overall information strategy of the nation in effort to create an equal and balanced flow of information and at the same time develop the intellectual life of the people. They also designed to improve the general comprehension of the rural media audience and obtain feed backs on indications of the audience's wishes and their real needs.

Up to 1987/1988, RRI had 49 broadcasting stations consisting of five "Nusantra" radio co-ordinating stations in the cities of Medan (Sumatra), Yogyakarta (Java), Banjarmasin (Kalimantan), Ujung Pandang (Sulawesi) and Jayapura (Irian Jaya).

There are also 27 RRI stations in each of the 27 provinces, 17 stations in the districts and 109 regional broadc/astings managed by the local administrations.
Television

Televisi Republik Indonesia (TVRI) is the state owned television. Up to 1987/1988, TV broadcasting stations totalled 10 namely one in each of the towns of Medan, Palembang, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Denpasar, Balikpapan, Ujungpandang, Manado and Bandung.

TV transmitters increased from 236 in 1986/1987 to 240 in 1987/1988. Transmitters have been placed in various provinces and enable the population at the border areas, transmigration settlements and remote places to watch the national TV programs. The government has made efforts to expand its TV broadcasting network and since 1982, 10 mobile production units have been available in 11 provinces.

A total of 115.40 million people were able to watch TV programs in 1987/1988 and 8,948,195 TV sets were registered. To spread information evenly to the rural areas, up to 1987/1988, 54,318 public TV sets were made available in the villages within the reach of TVRI telecast.

Film

Film production is directed to educate the young generation to be more aware of the national struggle of the Indonesian nation with the production of heroic feature films.

There are 54 film titles produced by the State Film Production Center (PPFN- Pusat Produksi Film Negara) such as "Jendral Sudirman" (animation film) "To Preserve the Environment" (Puppet film), Films on film strips, Documentary Films such as the "Trisula Mopping Up Operation" in South Blitar, the "Indonesian Communist Rebellion in Madiun" the "1987 General Election" and the serial puppet film "Si Unyil" and others.
With the introduction of the "Palapa" communication satellite in Indonesia, in 1976, the coverage of the electronic media, both radio and television, has been expanded. By now, radio broadcast reaches 80% of the population and TVRI more than 65%.

VIDEO

Video tapes and video cassettes which do not differ much from films in their role as mass media may exert positive as well as negative influence upon the way of life and culture of the society and nation.

The government has taken necessary steps to guard the national culture from negative influence from cassette recordings. A selective censorship has been imposed and repressive actions against the illegal flow of video cassettes by individuals as well as organized bodies have also been taken.

For the dissemination of development messages the Indonesian community in general is still making use of informal leaders in the surroundings, next to formal leaders. Usually the government in trusting community leaders for motivating the community in general for certain messages. Therefore communication follows certain stages, not directly to the community at large, but through a small group, representing the community and they pass it further on to their own followers. From data available at the Department of Information, the government is employing information officers, the number of which is not growing, while the number of people who need information is increasing.
c. Ethnic group

Taking into consideration the extent of the area from west to east, i.e. 5,193,230 km², it is not surprising that there are about 300 ethnic groups, using about 200 dialects or languages. The official language though is The Bahasa Indonesia written in the latin alphabet, but the majority speaks their own dialect among each other.

d. Socio economic situation

Socially the community is divided into the rural and the urban community. Their way of life is different, one from the other. Also their standards of life. Daily expenses from the people living in the rural areas are half of those living in the cities. Among the younger generation especially the aspects of consumerism are very obvious.

The urban community spends monthly an average of Rp 32,520,- monthly (equiv. of around 18 US dollar) per person, while the rural community only spends Rp 17,468,-, which is only half of what is being spent by the urban group (data 1987).

e. Education

Efforts to enhance the educational level of the community are showing encouraging results.

Of the 26,444,756 children of 7-12 years of age 25,983,962 are in elementary school.

Of the 11,899,025 children 13-15 years of age only 6,025,435 are continuing their studies.
The situation gets more discouraging for the 16-18 years of age group: of which there are 11,100,077 only 3,489,489 continue high school.

Of the 19-24 age group which number 2,010,873 only 391,398 are in university.

f. Constraints

Communication is still facing difficulties due to the geographical, ethnic and language situation as well as the different cultures. Whenever a message reaches a certain area through the printed as well as the electronic media, whoever has sent the message still has to take into account:

a.1. Does the content of the message agree with the situation and condition of the local people. Will they benefit from it.

a.2. Economic factors play an important role also. The price of one copy of a newspaper varies from Rp 100,- -- Rp 350,-.

The price of TV sets and radio are still a meaningful economic burden for part of the population.

a.3. The educational level of the population is not yet satisfactory. Though illiteracy has come down to 15% (data 1960), it is still not yet easy for those who have just started to write and read to understand printed media like newspapers, magazine and others.

Of the different communication activities, advertising has made considerable progress in the last decade, but communication for social welfare is still facing some constraint, particularly concerning the availability of funds.
III. THE PROFILE OF CHILD WELFARE

A. IMR

The IMR of a country is often considered an indication of the general status of health of a country. In Indonesia the IMR shows a decrease during 1971-1980 of 23.1% for the male infant and 23.7% for the female. In 1985 the IMR was 78.3 for male infants and 63.3 for the female infant.

According to a survey of the Department of Health (1980) the majority of deaths has been caused by tetanus neonatorum. The cause of death for babies between 1-11 month are mostly diarrhoea and infections of the upper respiratory track.

One way of minimizing the IMR is by improving their nutrition status.

According to data available at the Bureau of Statistics (1987) the nutritional status of infants in Indonesia is improved compared to previous years.

In 1987 the majority of infants (48.7) had a good nutritional status, 40.2% had a reasonable nutritional status, while 9.8% was bad and 1.3% very bad.

B. Education

The general policy for education is to improve the quality and extend possibilities for attending elementary education with the intention to achieve compulsory elementary education and extension of possibility for continuing elementary education until 9 years.
The percentage of school-going age population who are in school is used as a proximate of net enrollment ratio. This ratio shows the participation of population of certain ages in a particular educational level. In 1985 the number of children aged 7-12 years (Primary school ages) is 21 million. This gives a ratio of 85.0%.

For children in the 13-15 years age group or Junior High School ages in 1985 there are 7.1 million persons (or 3.1%) who are attending school.

In 1985 there are 3.6 million persons aged 16-18 years (Senior High School ages) who are attending school.

In the age group 19-24 years of Higher education ages there are more than 2 million persons who are in school with an average participation of 10.9%.

C. Maternal Mortality

Maternal mortality rate is still very high, 800 per 100,000 live births (1980-1984).

In order to bring this figure down certain messages have to be communicated in order that pregnant women are willing to come to health personnel for regular check-ups, next to family planning messages, urging families to keep the family small.

D. Diseases

Eleven diseases are the cause of infant deaths, i.e:
- diarrhoea
- respiratory track diseases
- tetanus
- perinatal disturbances
- neurological diseases
- other symptoms which are not very clear
- avitaminosis and other vitamin deficiencies
Government is escalating the immunization programme in order to lower the morbidity rate for infants, which is also very high (17.43%) compared to the morbidity rate of other age groups (data 1985/1986).

E. SOCIAL PROBLEM

According to the 1980 census there are 1,673,182 people with handicapped, of which 254,134 are children (about 15%). The handicapped are divided into the blind, the deaf and dumb, physical handicapped and the mental handicapped. According to a survey by the Central Bureau of Statistics, 50% of the 69 institutions for the care of the handicapped are privately run, which is in line with government policies, which would like to see that the community looks after the handicapped. The majority of these institutions look after the blind. More institutions which care for the other kinds of handicapped need to be developed.

THE INDONESIAN CHILD WELFARE FOUNDATION (ICWF) PROGRAM

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAME OF THOUGHTS

Indonesia as the fifth largest populated country of the world has a sixty-five million children under fifteen years of age. This is an enormous number, and it will for sure be of great value as a
potentian for the development of human resources for the country; but in contrary it will become a big burden for further development, when these children are being neglected in their growth and development.

As a developing country, Indonesia faces many problems of rehabilitation, like to lower the infant mortality rate, school drops-outs linked to child labour caused by economic conditions, many social problems due to social conditions, negative influences caused by advanced communication technology, and later in the group of young adults unemployment is a rising problem.

It is true that we are to deal with these repressive efforts, but we should not forget to start on preventive steps, taking care for the total development of the child of quality, mentally, physically and socially. It is therefore needed to settle a frame of thoughts, on efforts to take care of the development of the children population to achieve a better generation, compatible with the future challenging world.

II. PROBLEMS FACED

1. A growing population despite the family planning programme, also migration of the population to the big cities.

2. The heterogenous educational background and the multi-ethnics of the population is a factor that should be looked into, to enhance fruitful communication.

3. Lack of awareness and knowledge concerning the perception of the concept of child welfare. Motivation, commitment and self-reliance of the community is needed.
III. OBJECTIVES and HOPES

It is only when the community itself understands, commits and is motivated to take part in care of the children population towards a potential human resource can be achieved. The objectives of the foundation is to disseminate the idea to enhance a national movement on child welfare, so that the goals of the development of country and nation will be achieved through the development of human resources of quality, to face the future world, providing they also will be convinced executors for the Pancasila philosophy.

IV. THE PHILOSOPHY and BASIC OUT-LINE OF THE PROGRAMME

In the community many organized groups have been developed, taking care of child welfare activities. These organized groups take the form of foundations, religious groups, functional groups, parents associations, professional associations, women organization and many others including individuals. But they might be lacking in generating the total education concept of care and development of the child. Once we have this concept settled, this has to be communicated, disseminated to individuals as well as organized units in the community so that every effort in the community will enhance a synergistic effect and will have an optimal outcome as a whole.

Non-governmental organizations are there to accelerate the efforts and achievements, to fill in the gaps, and is a good vehicle for feed-back from the community to have improvements in optimalizing child welfare programmes in quantity and quality.

Since there was not such a body specifically for child welfare in 1979, when in the International Year of the Child was held and many achievement has been reached by the national committee, the Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation was founded and started to snow-ball the above ideas. And for reason
mentioned as in the background, the programme of the Foundation has not been types of activities at grass-root level, but functioned as a think-tank, communicator, information center, as well as experience several studies on child welfare.

1. As a think tank, the foundation in cooperation with other multidisciplinary organizations contribute in basic concepts as well as practical programme designs. This is further passed on to the diverse bodies and forums like, e.g. political forums, decision makers, the parliament, executives, and community leaders.

2. As a communicator, to generate promotive actions done by the foundation herself, as weil as by other organizations to highlight certain issues of child welfare.

3. Making efforts, to create an information network on child welfare at local, national, regional as well as international level.

4. To contribute in studies of different impacts on child care and development.

V. ACHIEVEMENTS

In particular considering that the media is an important vehicle for transfer and communication of ideas, and to condition the community to enhance self-motivation, the Indonesian Child Welfare Foundation has made specific efforts on communication aspects through the media.

In the first five years programme, the foundation has worked hand-in-hand with the media to campaign for the importance of the under-five children. A further effort in 1984 when the Foundation organized a National Conference on Child Welfare, a satellite seminar on media has been arranged to enhance a better
understanding of the problems of child welfare. This initiation step was then followed by periodical informal meetings with the media. Every year starting 1985 the Foundation has done a study on the media activities in covering child welfare issues. These studies were done on selective medias who has a large coverage, covering a period of 6 (six) months. The result was then highlighted on each National Children's Day, July 23rd of the year, and to the winners have been given a plaque of appreciation by the Minister of Information. A third step is that the Foundation has started to create an information documentation center for the interest of public's service including the scientific society. This center is supported by a library containing about 5,000 references. At this stage the information documentation center is trying to create a local information network at the local level. A bulletin which highlight issues on the child has been issued quarterly since mid 1987. A family monthly magazine "Balita" (the under-fives) has been issued.

Many pilots and studies have been done such as a study on child labour, a study on dock worker family in Tanjung Priok, a pilot on simplified pre-school education, educational films for pre-school children which is in preparation, creativity activities for children, youth travels.

Promotive actions are usually done every year in relation with the National Children's Day but in particular to generate awareness and motivation of the community for the care of the under-five. A contest of under-five children has been done every year and since 1987 it is done at a national scale covering the 27th provinces of Indonesia.

Many basic concepts in cooperation with the forum communication of child welfare called CFCW (consisting of 61 members of multidisciplinary groups) has been in particular of use for the basic out-line of the development of the country specifically for Child Welfare for the next five years 1981-1991. Since the declaration of "The Decade of The Indonesian Child" a
main outline of strategy has been settled. Further efforts in lobby is continuously done with the diverse parties of executives and leaders, to come to political decisions and strategies to achieve more and more acceleration efforts for child welfare.

VI. HOPES and RECOMMENDATION

To enlarge a communication network in information at regional as well as international level to enhance better understanding on care and development of children in several aspects to achieve child welfare in general, to obtain a future global impact for welfare, human kind and prosperity.
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