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THE COMMUNICATOR

The USAID PHN Newsletter for CAs

Volume 1 Number 2

January 2002

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THE COMMUNICATOR'S GOALS:

-- To increase the flow of information between USAID's Bureau for Global Health and CAs engaged in communications/public relations work

-- To enhance awareness of the need to disseminate news about our work and show why it is important

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If you did not receive the first issue of The Communicator, e-mail dgupta@pal-tech.com to receive it.

Since the release of the first issue of The Communicator, the world's perspective has been permanently altered by 9/11, making our work in communications more vital than in the past. Even as Americans have wrestled with this terrible tragedy, they have become increasingly aware of the crucial role international development plays in improving people's lives. Given that this is an educable moment, we will use this issue to update you on how others are thinking about their communications efforts in the post-9/11 world and provide you information and resources to help you share the importance of the work done by your organization.

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SCN GETS THE MESSAGE OUT

Since 9/11, most people have struggled to communicate their organization's objectives to the public, at the same time acknowledging the shift in global perspective and the public's thinking. The Sustainable Communicators Network (SCN), consisting of population and environment communications professionals, met in Washington, D.C., to share organizational messages and communication strategies. The meeting produced a comprehensive list of agreed-upon themes and messages, all stressing the importance of global development in eradicating violent behavior and instability. Special emphasis was given to opportunities for women and children in education, health, and economic development. Six main themes emerged:

- Creating a better, safer world.
- Our work contributes to eradicating some of the social and economic injustices that engender violence. We need to strengthen and expand this solidarity and support women and youth leaders.
- The importance of global agreements.
- Foreign aid is the key to establishing strong partnerships.
- Healthy women are key to more stable societies.
- To prevent terrorism, steps must be taken to address the needs of the world's most vulnerable and instill hope for a better life.

To view the entire document, which includes specific talking points from several agencies, including USAID, go to www.phnlp.com/news/911.html.

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POLLS FROM THE "REAL" WORLD

What do people who aren't involved in international development think? The public relations e-letter, The PR Network, recently reported on one of their member's (Jim Lustenader of the DVC Group, Inc.) thoughts about two surveys on post-9/11 effects on consumer behavior. The two surveys referenced are the DVC Group/Harris Interactive poll conducted Oct. 4-8 and a Roper poll conducted Sept. 18-19. "The consumer mood following the 9/11 terror attacks is subdued, cautious, and problematic," Lustenader wrote. "There is a shift in priorities along all geographic, socioeconomic, and generational lines. Safety, security, belonging, and affiliation have supplanted fulfillment, recognition, and even achievement... Emphasis is increasing on family, friends, and community." The DVC/Harris poll predicted short-term consumer behavior effects in travel, safety, finances, philanthropy, entertainment, and health. There will be a strong increase in consumer philanthropy, expressed in a willingness to buy from companies supporting charity and relief efforts. Consumers are showing signs of "cocooning," which will express itself in less air travel, more home entertaining, and more monitoring of children's media consumption.

Although these polls don't specifically mention it, the reference to American support for relief efforts reflects the new realization about the U.S. role in world affairs. As mentioned, this provides an opportunity for those of us in the development community to underscore what it is we are doing in our programs and to ensure that we make the point of how this helps people. This gets us back to our need for human interest, human-focused stories coming out of the field.

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CHARTING THE DIRECTION OF GLOBALIZATION

“The recent changes in our world have led us to the most pivotal moment in the history of our profession. We have the opportunity to elevate public relations to heights that would have seemed impossible in years past,” says David R. Drobis, senior partner and chairman of Ketchum and president of the International Communications Consultancy Organization (ICCO) in San Francisco. The public seems primed to listen and development organizations recognize the importance of accurate, timely messaging to the public. Drobis spoke at the recent ICCO conference about the combined impact of public relations practitioners and leaders in development to chart the direction of globalization in the near future. Says Drobis, “Moving from a mindset of relationship-building to confidence-building, we alone have the experience and the expertise to help unravel the tangled web of messages and misperceptions, dissolve confusion and mistrust, and build mutual confidence among groups so that globalization can reach its full potential.” Drobis targets three institutions for a strategic communications plan:

- (1) the private sector,
- (2) NGOs, and
- (3) international governmental institutions.

“Given the link between corporate social responsibility and reputation, we, as communications counselors, are in a unique position to help companies develop, institutionalize, and communicate social responsibility practices,” says Drobis. In order for NGOs to successfully communicate, he advocates working with thoughtful NGOs to prevent their messages from being squelched by more militant fringe organizations or from being ignored altogether. Finally, he notes that international government organizations, which tend to be inwardly focused, are often unfamiliar with message development, influencer outreach, and targeted media relations. This is just further evidence of the importance and necessity of a communications plan in today’s unpredictable environment. [Source: Steve Wynkoop, PR Network, <http://www.theprnetwork.com>]

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INTERNET MOTIVATES CIVIC ACTIVISM

The latest study from the Pew Internet & American Life Project (www.pewinternet.org) has found that the Internet may help reverse a decades-long decline in civic participation, particularly among younger adults. "One of the big concerns that has existed since the mid-1960s is that young people were withdrawing from civic life," said Lee Rainie, the project's director. "It was just striking to see this technology that is enormously popular with young people is a vehicle by which they are engaging in the community at some level." Overall, 84% of Internet users in the U.S. have used the Internet to contact or get information from a group. [SOURCE: Wall Street Journal, AUTHOR: Associated Press]

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RESOURCES FOR YOU

Communications Lesson: Elements of a Media Plan

The Spin Project offers resources and tutorials to assist social change organizations with their communications efforts. Their web site outlines a variety of tutorials to assist you, including one that defines the elements of a media plan. The first step is to think strategically about how you want media to complement your existing communications plan and then decide what media will fit best into that strategy. Most importantly, by thinking through your strategy, you can change your communications from being a reactive priority to a proactive project over which you have more control. Spin offers the following six-step process to maximizing your media potential:

- (1) Establish your goals
- (2) Target your audience
- (3) Identify your news
- (4) Frame the issue
- (5) Craft your media messages
- (6) Create a media plan

To view these steps, additional tips in creating your media plan, and sample media plans, go to

http://www.spinproject.org/resources/strategic_media_plans

The Wired Media: I.T. Influences Nonprofit/Foundation Work

The Surdna Foundation just released the publication, "More than Bit Players: How Information Technology Will Change the Ways Nonprofits and Foundations Work and Thrive in the Information Age" -- yet another document emphasizing the importance of the Internet in today's growing e-philanthropic environment and the potential for positive and negative repercussions. To view the entire publication, go to

<http://www.surdna.org/documents/morefinal.pdf>.

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NEWSLETTER AND LISTSERV EXAMPLES

For discussion lists and electronic newsletters of interest to nonprofit organizations, you may also want to check out the following Benton Foundation web pages with descriptions to help you choose: <http://www.benton.org/Practice/Toolkit/discuss.html> and <http://www.benton.org/Practice/Toolkit/newsletters.html>. Jayne Craven's "Technology Tip" sheet on Internet discussion groups provides one of the best descriptions and links to many nonprofit newsgroups and discussion forums at <http://www.coyotecom.com/list.html>.

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KNOWLEDGE EQUALS POWER

The Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs (JHUCCP), with support from USAID and UNIFEM, launched a comprehensive new web site containing more than 5,000 items from over 400 organizations devoted to ending violence against women. The End Violence Against Women web site provides policy makers, researchers, health communication specialists, and others with the latest information and materials from around the world related to violence against women. "By making everything we know conveniently available to a global audience of professionals, we can help them design better programs, promote policies that empower women, and learn from others working in the field to stop the violence against women," Phyllis Tilson Piotrow, Professor and Director of JHU/CCP, noted in the press release. The site allows the user to access policy documentation, articles, and publications on the latest research, training materials and curricula, and communication materials such as videos, brochures, and posters. Not only is the site a useful resource, it is also a great example of how the Internet can be used as a communications tool to increase knowledge and information sharing. Go to <http://www.endvaw.org> to see all the great resources.

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WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING

MSH: SAMPLE COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

Carmen Urdaneta, External Communications Officer for MSH's South Africa EQUITY Project, was kind enough to share her strategy and work plan for translating the technical into the topical. Carmen writes, "I just returned from India, where I had the opportunity to work with three NGOs that are implementing our Gates-funded Local Initiatives Project (LIP). I thought you might like to know that I used some information presented in the technical seminar on "Turning the Technical into Topical." I had taken some of the initial guidelines we talked about and developed them further for MSH, and have distributed them to MSHers so when they travel for technical scopes, they have a piece of paper to help guide them or stimulate discussion in different situations. The NGOs found the guidelines useful, they were bursting with stories, but just needed help pulling them together. So, we did some exercises and they came up with some wonderful stories. I also gave them a very simple guide to documenting their work. It was amazing how

something that we take for granted like describing the problem, talking about the intervention, and concentrating on achievements was just what they needed to help them document and communicate their work successfully! They now have a communications plan that incorporates their target audiences, key messages, activities, etc., and a couple of guides to documenting their work.” Visit www.phnip.com/news/doc_guidelines.html to read about Carmen’s great work.

The EQUITY Project: TELLING OUR STORIES - THE VOICES OF SOUTH AFRICA

Want to see Carmen’s blueprint at work? She sent stories from the EQUITY Project in South Africa. (For more information about the EQUITY Project, visit www.phnip.com/news/equity.html). This time the Bambisanani Project, providing home-based AIDS care, is highlighted. It’s another great example of telling an engaging human-interest story to inform the public about their important work. For more on MSH’s method for collecting compelling stories, visit www.phnip.com/news/stories.html.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

The latest issue of the Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) Project's newsletter, *New Directions in Reproductive Health*, is available (<http://www.cmsproject.com/resources/publications.cfm?view=>). Communications Director Sue Wood sends out alerts to targeted audiences to let them know new programs and to inform them when a new newsletter has been released. *New Directions in Reproductive Health* was created to provide ideas, contacts, and useful information in reproductive health programming. The latest issue presents India’s Goli ke Hamjoli campaign. Hindi for “Friends of the Pill,” Goli ke Hamjoli is a CMS mass media campaign that promotes the use of oral contraceptives in Northern India. The campaign strategy attacks deep-rooted myths about the side effects of oral contraceptive use. To do this, CMS developed a campaign plan to promote “generic” use of low-dose OCs through advertising, public relations, and training. Under this strategy, commercial oral contraceptive manufacturers promote their own brands under one umbrella theme (Goli ke Hamjoli). For more information about this project and CMS, go to <http://www.cmsproject.com>.

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YOUR FEEDBACK

With your participation, this newsletter can increase our interaction and participation in getting the word out about what we do. Let us know what you would like to see in this newsletter, what topics you want covered, or what additional items should be included to make it work. We also encourage you to become a contributor -- pass along stories about your program, including poignant accounts, major accomplishments, new publications, awards received, or upcoming conferences to dgupta@pal-tech.com.

Also, if you know people who should get this newsletter, let us know so we can add them to our subscribers list.

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