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1998

## Dissemination Strategy, July 1995–January 1998

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THE POPULATION COUNCIL

Asia and Near East Operations Research and  
Technical Assistance Project

**DISSEMINATION STRATEGY**  
**July, 1995 - January, 1998**

Contract Number: DPE-3030-C-00-0022-00  
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## BACKGROUND

During the first phase of the ANE OR/TA project (1990-1995) a total of 55 studies and 23 workshops were conducted in nine countries. In support of this effort, a dissemination strategy was produced that guided the communications activities of the first phase. Regional Communications Officers were hired in New Delhi and Cairo, and the project began to systematically address its objectives of communicating the findings of all studies to a diverse array of audiences within each country, subregion, and internationally. Several activities were undertaken to create a coherent and unified framework for disseminating the results of studies and informing our audiences of recent project developments. The following activities are illustrative of these accomplishments:

- ✓ Final Reports and Research Summaries format and design specifications defined and adopted by all project staff
- ✓ Three editions of the project newsletter "ALTERNATIVES" produced
- ✓ Readers' survey conducted of "ALTERNATIVES"
- ✓ Research Summaries briefing package produced
- ✓ Sophisticated computerized mailing list created in India (master) and Egypt (regional) and procedures for continually updating this data bank institutionalized
- ✓ Publications' list compiled and widely disseminated
- ✓ Photo bank created using professional photographer and local staff photos
- ✓ Networks of communications experts and services in each ANE OR/TA Project country identified and utilized

The ANE OR/TA project evaluation recommended exploring the development of additional dimensions, during the next phase, such as an audience needs assessment, developing local capacities for dissemination, conducting more follow-on efforts to enhance the utilization of OR results and disseminating results from clusters of projects that synthesize the OR experience regionally.

## UPDATED COUNTRY STRATEGIES.

After the original contract was awarded in 1990, USAID released in 1994 the document, **Strategies for Sustainable Development**. The strategy calls for greater emphasis on integrated approaches to expand reproductive choice and rights, decrease maternal and child mortality, help slow population growth, and reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other STDs. Because the programmatic implications of integrating such health interventions are largely unknown, the OR/TA program is increasingly called upon to determine the feasibility, acceptability, cost effectiveness of such linkages and integrated approaches.

Responding to the new approach the updated country strategies have outlined priority areas for OR/TA projects and activities. The updated dissemination strategy is designed to facilitate the project objectives and to be consistent with the needs and requirements of the specific country programs.

For example, in **India** a major demonstration project in Uttar Pradesh is testing alternatives to method specific targets in family planning programs. In the **Philippines**, the reintroduction of DMPA, and technical assistance to Local Government Units is being continued in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. In Indonesia, studies on the utilization of completed OR projects with BKKBN, the NORPLANT<sup>®</sup> implant strategy, and a reproductive health agenda with a focus on quality of care are being addressed. In **Egypt**, postabortion care and counselling, institutional capacity building, as well as cost issues are being focussed on. In **Bangladesh**, the working groups of the MOHFW on policy and programs are being continued while studies on male involvement, the role of private medical practitioners, and logistics issues are being considered.

The dissemination strategy takes into consideration the thrust, focus and nature of projects and their particular communication needs, and uses tools that are consistent and coherent to maximize utilization.

## **DISSEMINATION OBJECTIVES**

Dissemination is the key to facilitate the utilization of research results for policy and programs. Given the nature of activities conducted under the ANE OR/TA project, the tailored communication of results to target audiences is of critical importance. The first five years set out objectives for dissemination and communication which were useful and will continue to be used for the extension phase as well.

By the end of the 30-month extension phase the following objectives of the dissemination program will be achieved:

- The lessons learned from OR will be disseminated to a variety of audiences using communication materials and processes appropriate for each group.
- The institutionalization of OR communications methods and procedures will be developed in each ANE OR/TA country.
- The utilization of OR results by policy makers and program managers (locally, regionally and internationally) will be enhanced.
- The interaction and exchange of experiences and results among OR projects will be initiated and supported.

## COMMUNICATION CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The ANE OR/TA dissemination strategy is based on the *Audiences-Program Situation Model* developed from the Diffusion of Innovation theory<sup>1</sup>. The audience focus of this model reflects the primary purpose of operations research: addressing policy makers' and managers' problems with services. The model also disseminates the research findings in stages/phases rather than as one shot activity and facilitates receiving feedback and evaluation on the effectiveness of the implemented activities. The communication stages in this model are presented in the following table:

**Table 1**  
**Research Stages and Expected Dissemination Activities**

Research Stage	Expected Dissemination/Utilization Action
1. Introduction of Research	Survey potential beneficiaries and learn about their interest and needs. Provide brief introduction and increase their awareness about the research.
2. Research Development	Update and inform the audience about the study's development and its preliminary outcomes.
3. Research Completion	Inform the target audiences about the research findings with tailored messages through different communication channels.
4. Research Follow Up Activities	Follow up and assist with the utilization of the research findings. Link the research to the local, regional and global OR agenda.

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<sup>1</sup> Everett M. Rogers "Diffusion of Innovations", Third Edition, The Free Press, New York. 1983





## **STRATEGIC PLAN-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

### **1. *Assist in developing local institutional capacity in dissemination of research findings.***

Building local dissemination capacity is one of the priority goals for this strategy. Local capacity may be developed in either public, non governmental or private institutions depending upon the country's program. For example, in Egypt an NGO will be the focus of institutionalization efforts, while in the Philippines Local Government Units and Universities are the targets of institutional capacity building effort. This flexibility in targeting institutions complements the project's overall objective of achieving the institutionalization of the OR approach in the most appropriate local organizations. Planning dissemination activities for the individual research projects will be coordinated from the early stages of the proposal development with local organizations. In addition, communications technical assistance will be provided to local managers and researchers to help them identify the target groups, the audiences' common interests, the type of messages and materials they would like to receive.

### **2. *Diversify the range of communication channels to maximize the reach of the dissemination activities***

A variety of communication channels will be exploited by the project, including print, interpersonal and electronic. A mix of the channels will be used for any given study, with the target audience and the message determining the selection of the channels to be used. This will require a variety of partners for the communication activities including: graphic artists, editors, journalists, electronic communications experts, printing shops, public relations firms, and others.

### **3. *Strengthen the mechanisms for ensuring the utilization of findings and to document the impact of OR***

A utilization section for each ANE OR/TA study will be developed as a part of each project that clearly identifies: the study's target audiences, the problematic questions that this research will answer (the study's key messages), how the findings will be communicated (channels), in what way the target groups will be involved in the process from the beginning of the study to ensure their use of the research. In addition, follow up

activities to ensure the utilization of the research will be built into the work plan for each study.

#### **4      *Develop Inter-regional Dissemination Activities***

Collaboration and coordinating with the Population Council's Africa and Latin America operations research projects will be developed to advance international understanding of operations research, and to make the most efficient use of each project's resources. Some examples of joint activities include the following:

- ✓      Sharing of messages, and reports
- ✓      Coordinating production of the Email home page
- ✓      Developing common strategies
- ✓      Production of papers describing contemporary communication programs for operations research

### **ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY: AUDIENCE, MESSAGE AND CHANNEL**

The simplistic model of Audience - Message - Channel belies a complex matrix of audiences arranged on different levels (local, regional, international) that are involved in different aspects of population programs (policy, services, research, many others). Many OR studies respond to one or more of these audiences, although each group will require a slightly different message delivered through a well-tailored medium. Fortunately several messages and channels are crosscutting. This section presents an overview of the principle issues involved in segmenting the ANE OR/TA audiences, strategically tailoring the messages for each, and disseminating the messages through the most powerful channel.

#### ***Target Audiences***

The target audiences for an OR project can be categorized into three levels: international, regional (ANE region), and country level. The following types of audiences fall within these levels:

## 1. Decision and Policy Makers

- National government officials
- Private and NGO Executive Directors
- International service organizations (e.g., IPPF)

## 2. Service Institutions (locally and regionally)

- Staff of local service delivery agencies
- Researchers (universities, research institutions and projects)
- Other special groups (women's organizations, media, clients of family planning and reproductive health services and, others)

## 3. Donors and International Organizations

- USAID Washington and local Missions
- Other donors, such as UNFPA, and the World Bank
- Cooperating Agencies (CAs)

### ***Communication Messages***

Each of the above audiences requires tailored messages for easy comprehension and relevance. Some general principles are used to guide message development. For example, messages disseminated within a country need to be focused on solutions of a local service problem. By contrast international messages should be positioned to describe how a country's research fits within a more global agenda. In addition, there are common messages that audiences on every level will respond to. Examples of these cross-cutting messages include: announcements of starting a new research project; progress made with on-going research and initial results; findings from completed research; and policy implications from unique studies.

In general, all of the OR messages will have the following attributes:

- ✓ Clarify how this research has contributed to solving a specific problem.
- ✓ How it links to other areas such as reproductive health and gender.
- ✓ How it fits within the national and the global OR agenda.
- ✓ What are the doors it has opened for future research, and what are the remaining challenges.
- ✓ How the study findings have been effectively utilized.

### ***Communication Channels***

A mix of channels will be used to reach the target audiences. The nature of the research project and the target audiences will determine the type and multiplicity of channels used. Print media, interpersonal and electronic communication tools will be utilized. An analysis of the preferred channels for reaching a variety of audiences will be undertaken in an "Audience Needs Assessment" (described in the next section).

### **MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE**

The two ANE OR/TA communications officers will cooperate with all project staff to implement the following activities of this communication strategy. In addition the ANE OR/TA Project Communication Officers will interact with the Africa OR/TA and INOPAL Communication Officers for interregional activities. They will be under the direct supervision of the Project Director and the Deputy Director. Although the officer in Cairo will be chiefly responsible for dissemination in the Near East, and the officer in New Delhi for South and East Asia, both officers will collaborate on project wide activities and share responsibilities for supporting the work in any of the ANE OR/TA countries. Their workplans will be reviewed quarterly to ensure coordination and production of priority materials. To maintain quality and consistency, all materials for international distribution will be reviewed by the Deputy Director and/or Project Director before distribution, while information intended within a given country will be reviewed by the Host Country Advisor and either the Deputy or Project Director.

Interregional cooperation between the ANE OR/TA Project and its counterparts in Africa and Latin America will be pursued. By the end of the 30 month period, joint programming of several dissemination efforts should be routine.

## **DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

The principal communication activities that will be undertaken by the ANE OR/TA Project are described in this section. These activities will give content to the list of communication channels cited in the box.

### **1. Audiences Needs Assessments**

A needs assessment that defines the ANE OR/TA Projects target audiences, (including a continual updating of the project audience list), their information needs and the optimal communication channels will be performed during the first semester in each country where the project operates. The ANE OR/TA Project Communication Officers will conduct the communication needs assessments in India and Egypt, and provide technical assistance to project staff in Bangladesh, the Philippines and Indonesia for the communications needs assessment in each of these countries.

### **2. ANE OR/TA Project Newsletter ALTERNATIVES**

The production of newsletter **ALTERNATIVES** will continue on a semiannual basis during the extension phase. The ANE OR/TA Project **ALTERNATIVES** will incorporate findings and examples from operations research studies in other regions that are relevant to the theme of each issue.

#### **Summary Checklist of ANE OR/TA Project Communication Channels**

##### **Print Media**

- **Reports (Interim, and Final)**
- **Research summaries**
- **Success Stories**
- **OR Brochure**
- **Monthly reports ("Blurbs")**
- **Published articles**
- **Working papers**
- **Project Newsletter ALTERNATIVES**
- **Press releases and media briefs**
- **Lessons Learned Booklet**
- **OR Handbooks (in Hindi and Arabic)**

##### **Interpersonal Communication**

- **Communication technical assistance**
- **Final dissemination seminars**
- **Small dissemination meetings**
- **Workshops**
- **National and International conferences**
- **End of project conference**
- **Media advocacy**

##### **Electronic Channels:**

- **OR home page on the Internet**
- **Email network/POPLINE**
- **Local Television**

A special issue of **ALTERNATIVES** (April '96) will contain an overview of the results of the first five years, utilization as well as planned activities of the ANE OR/TA project countries in the extension phase.

### **3. Research Summaries**

The Research Summaries are designed to present important findings and policy implications in a capsule form of key ANE OR/TA Project studies. The Research Summaries packet consists of a single page, back to back, organized into the sections of Background / Methodology, Findings, and Utilization. A note on references and contacts for further information is given at the end of the Summary. The Research Summary may present interim results from an ongoing study or it may review the key findings from a completed body of work. It's design will promote a quick overview of the ANE OR/TA project.

### **4. Monthly Reports ("Blurbs") and Success Stories**

Blurbs are one paragraph activity reports targeted for USAID Washington officials. Each Blurb can present brief findings and key policy implications of a study, or highlight an interesting project activity. The Success Story is a more fully elaborated. It contains a human interest perspective and indicates the long term impact or larger context of the study. The Success Stories will present the study's impact on the lives of women and how operations research has made a difference in the quality of life of the public served.

### **5. OR Home Page and Email Network**

A "Home Page" was recently created on the Internet for presenting the Population Council's operations research results. In addition, periodic transmissions of Research Summaries through an Email list will be made. Research Summaries, articles from **ALTERNATIVES**, new project updates, publications list, and other materials found suitable for wider distribution will be posted on this Home Page. This will help to put the OR findings in a more global context and would link it to other important issues.

### **6. Lessons Learned Booklet**

The Lessons Learned Booklet is a publication that will synthesize the OR experience across the different thematic areas in different countries. Research results will be presented to show the range of activities initiated and the type of impact they have yielded. A special chapter will be devoted to lessons learned in utilization of research. This booklet would be directed to program managers, policy and decision makers, USAID, CAs, researchers and the media. Excerpts from the booklet will be made available on the Internet through the Home Page.

### ***7. Translation of OR Material into Hindi***

The Handbook for Family Planning and Operations Research Design and/or other materials produced in English and Arabic will be translated during the next phase in Hindi. It will be an important step towards assisting local institutions understand the process of operations research in simple step by step format. Researchers, program managers, and local NGOs who wish to conduct operations research and learn more about its management would be the main target groups for this translated material.

### ***8. Final Reports***

A unified "look" with selected regional colors, size, and format was designed for the ANE OR/TA project Final Reports. Guidelines regarding format, fonts, spacing, use of pictures, graphs, division of chapters, writing style and language have been adopted by all country offices. The project's Final Reports will continue to follow the same guidelines and format in its production during the next phase. They will be channeled to USAID staff, policy and decision makers, program managers, CAs, researchers, and local service and research institutions. Report summaries in local languages will continue to be produced as well to ensure better utilization. An abstract for each report will be added for posting on the Email network and POPLINE.

### ***9. Publications List***

A comprehensive publications list of all reports, papers, and books produced by the project staff will continue to be updated semiannually. The publications list will be posted on Email network and will be available to country offices for local dissemination. The



publications list will be attached to mailings of the project documents (e.g. brochures, research summaries, updates) to raise awareness of the ANE OR/TA Project publications that are available.

### ***10. Target Audience List***

The ANE OR/TA Project target audience list is a computerized data bank that contains approximately 2,500 entries. Each entry is cross referenced with up to 10 thematic areas of professional interest (e.g., contraceptive technology, reproductive health, gender, community based distribution systems). The India office maintains an ANE master list, while the Cairo office has a WANA regional list. The audience needs assessment will assist in the process of updating and refining the project's computerized target audience list.

### ***11. Photo Bank***

The photography project conducted during the first phase of the project produced about 500 slides of family planning and reproductive health project images, in addition to images of local settings involving men, women and youth from rural and urban settings, and from different socio-economic classes. The photography project includes images from Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Indonesia and the Philippines. The photos generated from this project has been used for the production of the **ALTERNATIVES** newsletter, final reports, some of the Population Council publications and staff presentations in national and international conferences. The photo bank will be exploited throughout the extension phase for the same purposes. In addition, it will be made available to USAID/Missions, the regional offices of the Population Council, other OR projects, CAs and local organizations. An announcement of the availability of this service will be issued and addressed to other CAs.

## ***12. Staff Presentations at Scientific Meetings***

In the process of enhancing the utilization of OR results and strengthening the interaction among target groups, the project staff will continue to present the research findings at national, regional and international conferences and workshops, (e.g., PAA, APHA, IUSSP and others).

## ***13. Technical Assistance to Local Managers and ANE OR/TA Project Staff***

Providing communication technical assistance to local organizations as part of building their local institutional capacities is one of the main focus areas of this strategy. The communications needs assessment in each country will assist in focusing this TA on specific objectives and activities.

## ***14. Media Advocacy***

To initiate effective media advocacy activities a network of journalists and media professionals interested in the field of population will be established in each country. They will be regularly contacted and updated about the type of activities that the projects undertake. Press releases, special briefings and other documents will be developed to assist the local press to produce articles on current operations research projects.

## ***15. End of Project Conference***

The End of Project Conference is a major opportunity to present the ANE OR/TA project into the global frame. Results of research will be presented to a wide range of participants who will constitute the different groups of the project target audience. The conference will also draw attention to the impact the project has created in the field of family planning and reproductive health in the different countries. The End of Project Conference is planned for the last semester of 1997.

## **EVALUATION OF DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES**

During the extension phase the ANE OR/TA project will produce an internal

evaluation plan that describes the procedures used to monitor the progress of all project activities. The internal evaluation plan will include reference to monitoring the progress made with implementing the project's communication strategy. This section of the communication strategy will present an overview of the principle monitoring and evaluation activities, and refers to the forthcoming internal evaluation plan for a more comprehensive description of the evaluation activities.

A communication process that adopts a linear model of dissemination, focusing on the Message -- Transmission -- Audience approach can be evaluated using a hierarchical effects approach for tracking the dissemination reception and utilization of messages. The following list is suggestive of the steps the ANE OR/TA project's communication strategy will collect data on to track the effectiveness of its activities.

1. Were the messages / materials produced ?
2. Were they disseminated ?
3. Did the target audience receive the messages ?
4. If received, does the target audience remember the messages?
5. If remembered, were the messages useful ?

The application of this hierarchical effects design will require that the Communications program of the ANE OR/TA project collect special data on some activities. Process-type indicators (e.g., questions 1 and 2) will be documented for all studies. Reception indicators (question 3) can be tracked as well for all studies. The higher level indicators pertaining to use will require special studies for investigation. These are most appropriately done for operations research studies that were conducted during the project's first phase (see examples), and may require follow-up surveys of target audiences, or expert committees to review and discuss OR conducted in the preceding few years.

***Illustrative Examples of  
Communication Activities Phase I  
that can be Evaluated***

***✓ Arabic IUD brochure that presented major findings of the study of "IUD Use Dynamics in Egypt" and was widely distributed to physicians of the Ministry of Health.***

***✓ Evaluation of the Family Planning Policy Fortnight that aimed at promoting the design of policy options in Bangladesh.***

***✓ Evaluation of the BSUP reports and briefing papers utilized by MOHFW and IFPS project in India.***

***✓ Evaluation of the Situations Analysis follow up activities conducted in Indonesia.***

***✓ Evaluation of the utilization of OR by LGU program in the Philippines.***

The review of the utilization of the OR results is the final test of the success of the OR/TA effort. Reviews have been conducted in the Philippines and Bangladesh and similar exercises have been planned in Egypt, India and Indonesia.

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**APPENDIX I**  
**DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES TIME LINE**

## DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES TIME LINE

Activities	1995	1996				1997				1998
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Jan.
Audience Needs Assessment	✓	✓								
ALTERNATIVES	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Research Summaries and updates			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Monthly reports		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Success Stories		✓			✓		✓		✓	
OR Email network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lessons Learned Booklet			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Translation of OR Materials in Hindi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Publications list			✓		✓		✓		✓	
Mailing List	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Photo Bank	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Presentations at scientific meetings	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
Technical Assistance		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Media Advocacy		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
End of Project Conference					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Final Reports	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓