Communication, Development and Women's Participation in Human Settlements Management
# Table of Contents

**Communication, Development and Women’s Participation in Human Settlements Management**

1. Introduction .............................................................................................................................................1
2. Basic concepts ........................................................................................................................................3
3. Development practice and communication .............................................................................................6
4. Information on women in human settlements .......................................................................................10
5. Development support: communication to enhance the participation of women in settlements management ........................................................................................................................................11

Potential contribution of the women’s movement to communication support for human settlements development and management ........................................................................................................................................17

- A. Women’s view of communication...............................................................17
- B. The outset of the United Nations decade for women........................................17
- C. Information .........................................................................................................................18
- D. Review and appraisal of the progress achieved in the status of women in communication and the media during the United Nations decade for women ..........................................................19
- E. Forward-looking strategies ......................................................................................21
- F. Institutionalization and networking ........................................................................21
- G. Images of women in the media .............................................................................23
- H. Advertisement ..............................................................................................................24
- I. Women’s participation in the media ........................................................................25
- J. Alternative communication approaches developed by women ........................................26
- K. Impact of media on women ...................................................................................28

Integration of women in human settlements development and management through communication support ........................................................................................................................................31

- Legislation ...........................................................................................................................31
- Finance ...............................................................................................................................32

References .............................................................................................................................................34

Annex I: List of women’s audio-visuals related to settlements problems ......................................................38
Communication, Development and Women's Participation in Human Settlements Management

HS/126/88E ISBN 92–1–131052–0

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

UNITED NATIONS CENTRE FOR HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat) 1988

Introduction

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This paper concerns itself with the urban poor living in self−built slum and squatter settlements. It suggests that establishing communication with this majority is an effective way of helping them to solve their problems. It also suggests that doing so with a view to the needs and contributions of women is a prerequisite for sustained and participatory solutions.

"In the past 35 years the world population doubled, reaching 4.8 billion in 1985. Since 1950 the concentration has been in the developing countries. In the next 15 years around 230,000 people will be added to the world population every day. Eight out of every ten of them will be residents of developing countries...Population growth is more than matched by the pace of urbanization...If present trends continue, nearly half the world's population will live in towns and cities at the turn of this century...The urban dwellers of developing countries will double within the coming 15 years, and triple in the next 40 years. And the cities of the poorest countries will have 68,000 new residents added to their existing populations on a daily basis." (JUNIC, 1988: 2)

More than a quarter of the world's population live under appalling conditions. These conditions are particularly visible in self−built low−grade urban communities.

"In many cases, nine out of ten new dwellings added to a country's new housing stock per year are privately and unofficially built." (UNCHS (Habitat), 1983: 3)

The critical problem of settlements development and management lies in these self−built, often unrecognized or "illegal" parts of cities. There is little information about the dynamics of growth, and the characteristics and conditions of these slums and squatter settlements. Also lacking is adequate communication between them and the policy−making mechanisms. The backlog of the unmet housing demand is on the rise in developing countries. The shrinking governmental capacity to meet this demand has increased reliance on people's participation in settlement development and management. Participation may take many forms and has to be guided through appropriate policies. Communication is critical for the formulation and execution of these policies. The establishment of multi−directional communication between policy−makers, people, and other parties concerned is essential to ensure their co−operation in meeting the demand for shelter in a self−sustained and planned manner.

False assumptions concerning the actual and potential role of women in development underline the lack of consideration for women's issues. (JUNIC, 1988) Women assume multiple roles and perform them simultaneously. These roles include the provision of basic services, construction and maintenance of shelter and infrastructure. The lack of recognition of the critical contribution women make to settlements development and management causes bias in the delivery of development services: the result is a failure to attain settlement development objectives. If improvements in the settlement conditions of the urban and rural poor are intended, they cannot be achieved without the continued contribution of women.

Since further improvements in settlements conditions cannot be attained without partnership between the people and government, measures ought to be taken to avoid a human resources waste through the exclusion of women from such a partnership. Bringing women into such a partnership effectively may require legislative action. funding, education and training. It also requires well−designed communications planning.
Indeed, without such planning, a dialogue with the people cannot be established.

A communications process is not gender-neutral. This is especially so in an environment where the contribution of women to settlement development and management are underestimated or ignored. Therefore, a communications effort to enhance popular participation in shelter management must be based on an understanding that if women are to devote their time, energy and resources to the development process, they must benefit from it on an equal basis; they must also be allowed to improve the quality of their contribution to such a process by becoming equal recipients of information, education, training, finance and other development inputs and by taking their place among the ranks of professionals, decision- and policy-makers.

The role communications can play in promoting the status of women and in enhancing their participation in mainstream development has not been sufficiently examined. In addition, the role of communications in enhancing the participation of women in settlement development and management has never received specific attention. During the past two decades various communications strategies have been employed to solve development problems. Systematic considerations of their applicability to Women in Development (WID) programmes and projects have, however, not been made.

As with women's issues, communications issues have received low priority in development practice. Well-designed communications planning has not yet become an integral part of mainstream development. Although "communication for social change is as old as organized society ... where development schemes are concerned, we are hard put to explain how it took so long to act on the principle that communication for social change is a fundamental adjunct to inputs of infrastructure and technology." (FAO, 1988:15)

Increasingly, however, a greater role is being assigned to communication in the attainment of development objectives. To this end, traditional forms of communication are being combined with modern media and telecommunication systems to create the maximum impact. While the specific applications for WID are few, the potential offered by the tremendous upsurge in telecommunication technology is expanding the outreach and impact of development communication and mass media. This has definite implications for the design and implementation of national WID programmes as well as for the exchange of information on such programmes across countries. It is particularly important to consider these implications for the promotion of the status of women in mainstream sectors such as construction, energy, transport and other aspects of settlements where their participation in management is much needed.

Much has been said about the need to pay greater attention to the human dimension in development. Yet, such attention has often been missing from development action. In such technical processes as building roads and high-rise accommodation, construction of dams, and installation of energy networks, the integration of the human dimension poses significant difficulties. There are two sides to an explanation that can be offered for this observation. First, mainstream policy-makers are rarely convinced of the necessity of integrating the human dimension in what they conceive to be strictly technical work. Secondly, they fail to appreciate the utility of establishing a dialogue with the people in the design and implementation of policy. It is nowonder, therefore, that communication planning has so far not been built into energy, water, transport, and housing development in a systematic manner. By the same token, women, together with the rest of the poor, are brought into the mainstream development process either in an accidental and haphazard manner, or are completely excluded.

If a commitment to popular participation is made, it is important to avoid the exclusion of human factors likely to arise from an inadequate understanding of development support communication. "While the fundamental causes of underdevelopment are essentially structural, it is increasingly recognized that deficiencies in information – and communication – processes are among the major causes of policy, programme and project ineffectiveness and failure." (UNCHS (Habitat), 1983: 2)

Therefore, acquisition of relevant information and the institution of communication mechanisms are essential to the success of all development efforts, and especially so for human settlements management. When such information is gender-specific and when communication planning takes into account the critical contributions of women to development, in general and to settlements development and managements in particular, policies can be more effectively formulated and implemented. An appropriate information/communication strategy is particularly important in enhancing the participation of women in mainstream development activities.

Ensuring equality between women and men, and increasing the effectiveness of the participation of women in society, requires basic structural and attitudinal changes. It also requires the attainment of a balance in social, economic and political power between the two sexes. Traditional perceptions and attitudes are often major
constraints in the process of such a change. To eliminate these perceptions and attitudes, women and women’s groups have strengthened their communication activities. They have tried to change negative stereotyped images and to institute more realistic and positive attitudes in society so as to create an acceptance, by women and men, of the many critical roles women play in society. To do so they have established effective social and organizational networks and targeted in on the elimination of stereotyping in the educational and the mass media.

Despite the realization of the importance of communications in shaping the image of women in society, efforts to use communication as an input to policy, as a device to bring women’s voices into development planning, and as a means to facilitate the contributions of women to development activities have thus far received secondary importance. While many countries are still in the process of creating an awareness of the need for a policy response to women in mainstream development sectors, they have not yet translated this awareness into practice.

The 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace and Forum ’85, which was held simultaneously with the Conference, drew attention to the need for women’s full participation in settlements management. UNCHS (Habitat), Jointly with the Branch for the Advancement of Women of CSDHA, held an International seminar in December 1985, bringing together representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations for women to identify issues of concern to women in settlements management. This seminar discussed ways and means of increasing the dialogue between women’s organizations and mainstream development sector policy-makers in order to ensure specific consideration of women in all types of settlements policies, programmes and projects. (JUNIC, 1988)

During 1987, the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, sub-regional meetings of shelter sector policy-makers and of non-governmental organizations dealing with settlements also drew attention to the same set of questions. During the same year conferences on women and shelter, organized mostly by non-governmental organizations for women, were held in many parts of the world. Also, an intergovernmental meeting was sponsored by SIDA in East Africa on the same topic. Finally, in 1988, UNCHS (Habitat) developed five separate sub-regional seminars on women in human settlements development and management. These seminars brought together policy-makers of settlements sectors, and governmental and non-governmental organizations for women. While all other international and national conferences and seminars dealt primarily with the identification of women’s issues in settlements management, the sub-regional seminars organized by UNCHS (Habitat) in 1988 aimed specifically at promoting the role of communication in enhancing the participation of women in settlements. To this end, training support communication materials have been prepared and workshops on communication have been organized. (UNCHS (Habitat), 1988 a, b, c, d, e)

These efforts have already resulted in an appreciable response to women’s issues in settlements programmes. Currently, this response is largely induced by non-governmental organizations for women that are supported by bilateral and international organizations. Their emphasis on communication coupled with an enhanced role of communication in development is likely to create a women-friendly approach to settlements planning in the years to come, but the process will be difficult and slow.

A strong political commitment is essential to ensure that women participate equally in management and communications to this end, as well as for support of other development activities. This is so for both the developed and developing countries. Otherwise, women—and women’s organizations will not be actively sought out and the media will not be mobilized to build a bridge between development specialists and the people.

"The involvement of the media and of the women’s organization in the development effort depends largely upon the support of the government agencies – and thus the role of national leadership is crucial. A commitment at the highest level is necessary to involve women in national planning, to unequivocally support women’s efforts to help themselves, and to use the media to its fullest potential for the education of (the people)." (Ekstrom, 1979: 123)

**Basic concepts**

Information consists of knowledge or data. Communication is the transfer of information. It is, at the same time, a social process by which information is transferred from a sender to a receiver in order to influence the
knowledge, opinion, attitudes and/or behaviour of the latter. This influence can aim to change attitudes, behaviour etc., or to reinforce existing ones. Senders and receivers can be individuals, groups, organizations or other collectivities.

Communications are systems, methods or means of transferring, transmitting, transporting or disseminating information; as such they are infrastructure consisting of roads, telephone networks etc.

Communication, whether personal or non-personal, always involves people. A communication gap exists when senders and receivers do not understand one another or do not agree with one another; as such, better communication means better understanding between parties who exchange information with one another. A communication problem consists of the reception of inadequate or inappropriate information, and a communication strategy involves ways and means of improving information transfer to a certain target group. (Knecht, 1985)

Communication systems are mediators for social interaction through exchange of messages.

"Access to messages provides a basis for knowledge and social transformation and participation. Messages are expressed as images and codes into complex systems and processes and refer to everything that has perceived meaning for individuals and social groups." (Moore, 1983: 12)

Messages are carried through a large variety of devices (media), ranging from interpersonal media to mechanized media, employing transmitters through which messages are multiplied to be received by large numbers of people in different locations at once, or stored, retrieved and transmitted at a later stage. Mass media, such as print media, radio and television programmes, and films belong to this category. In addition, new methods of gathering, storing, retrieving and using information have been invented by the microelectronic chip industry and these include telecommunication technologies such as satellites, telexes, telephony, and video and computer technologies. Media are vehicles that bring the message to a target group. For instance, a television monitor might be the medium through which a film is viewed by the audience.

The effectiveness of messages carried by media may be enhanced by services provided by intermediaries. A film prepared by a governmental agency but shown by a non-governmental organization may have greater reception and credibility than that which is transmitted through the national television network. Intermediaries would also ensure that messages are "tuned as far as possible to the experiences and expectations of the target groups." (Knoers, 1988: 13)

- Education, training and communication all play similar roles in society. They transfer knowledge, and change attitudes and behaviour. Although a great deal can be gained by their planning in an integrated manner, this is almost never done even in the context of small-scale specific projects. Rather, communication is occasionally used to educate, and education and training are used to communicate better. More recently, concepts such as "training support communication," and "educational support communication" have been used to characterize processes of "better" or "more effective" education and training.

Development communication support, or communication support for development, is a social process of sharing information, knowledge, ideas and motivation between policy-makers, institutions, organizations, communities, and individuals in order to ensure a more participatory and democratic society in which development objectives are jointly defined and attained. In this sense, communication is at the very centre of development. (Balcomb, 1983)

"In essence, development communication is the sharing of knowledge aimed at reaching consensus for action that takes into account the interest, needs and capacities of all concerned...Communication alone cannot bring about...development, but without a provision of knowledge between people at all levels, the other inputs to development – infrastructure, supplies and services – will not be used to full advantage, or even go wasted." (FAO, 1988: 1)

Communication support is the provision that a policy, programme or project has incorporated a carefully designed package of information, education and motivation to help achieve its objectives. Among different types of communication support, project support communication has been in practice for over 20 years. (Sweeney and Leonard, 1983). Communication support activities can consist of person-to-person contacts, group discussions, street theatres, formal instructions, advertisement, or mass media utilization. Regardless of the medium used, communication support is people-oriented. While a people-oriented approach facilitates concern for women, past experience shows that orientation alone does not ensure women-friendly applications. For instance, despite their explicit purpose of bringing people into the core of development.
activities, a large portion of community development projects are targeted to men or to households headed by men. Review and evaluation of these projects, including the review of their communication component, also ignore women’s participation in a specific way. (Moore, 1983; Balcomb, 1983; Linden, 1983; van Dijk, 1983)

Development support communication is not always participatory in nature. Indeed, "top−down" development communication is a more common application. (United Nations, 1974; Vejrathon 1970 In the past, population programmes have provided relatively unique examples of reliance on communication support activities. They have also been oriented to women more than any other development activity. However, the communication approaches used have often been more "persuasive" and "commercial" than participatory. In these programmes, beneficiaries have been persuaded to use chosen contraceptives rather than been asked to become programme "partners in the sense of contributing labour, money or ideas. Indeed, they were sometimes given cash rewards for co−operating.’ (Balcomb, 1983: 4)

Increasing emphasis is being placed on popular participation as relatively it reduces governments’ inability to supply settlements goods and services. This, In turn, places an emphasis on a process of "participatory communication' in which information is shared between all parties involved in a development effort and within which all have something to learn from one another. The assumption that planners and policy−makers, engineers and architects, contractors and finance experts have little or nothing to learn from the people has been replaced by a model of mutual exchange of knowledge and experience throughout the life of a programme. In this way, monitoring and evaluation is undertaken continually and automatically rather than in an artificial and superimposed manner. This is because in a genuine two−way system of communication, a return of information (feedback) is unavoidable; when this information is evaluated (monitored), communication will unfold and new elements will be introduced to the communication strategy employed.

For development support communication to be truly participatory in nature, multidirectional communication is desirable. In such a system individual views are communicated to communities and communities find ways and means of reaching the policy−makers: similarly, policies are communicated to communities and to individuals by national and local governments. Individuals need not always have the intermediacy of communities to establish communication between themselves and policy−makers: direct communication, and communication through other types of organizations and associations are equally important. If communities are to be improved, the involvement of these three parties as well as all other public and private interest groups is essential. However, current development communication between women and men, people and leaders, communities and local and central governments, politicians and development specialists, public and private sectors, governmental and non−governmental organizations is weak and is particularly so with respect to women.

Development support communication serves many important functions. (van Dijk, 1983; Schoenmakers, 1983: Perrett. 1982)

(a) It provides factual information to potential beneficiaries of development activities; avoids lengthy discussion of procedures or training of promoters;

(b) It provides motivational information and raises interest among potential beneficiaries of development activities: provides insight to planned activities and facilitates better understanding by the target populations of their own situations;

(c) It facilitates acquisition of information about target groups: their living conditions, their priorities and aspirations, their approach to communication;

(d) It designs effective eligibility criteria to facilitate widespread participation in planned activities and thus enhances participants’ involvement in them; creates alternative ways and means for target groups to take part in the planned development efforts through feedback obtained from the target groups;

(e) It facilitates change among target populations; helps establish a spirit of community in physical neighbourhoods; helps establish alternative ways of community organization;

(f) It helps ensure effective implementation; avoids delays and ensures early involvement:

(g) It helps reduce negative attitudes and behaviour: eliminates resistance, stereotyping and discrimination against groups of individuals within targeted communities;

(h) It helps prevent undesirable impacts;
Communication strategies are geared to the functions they are meant to serve. Specific characteristics of policies, programmes, and projects for which communication support is provided also determine strategy components. If an overall traffic improvement is aimed for in a metropolitan area, all residents, vehicle users and pedestrians alike, are targeted; mass media is mobilized, posters are prepared, simple messages are formulated and slogans are selected. If planners decide to improve slum and squatter areas through self-help, early involvement of the people will have to be assured. The size, homogeneity and other characteristics of the communities involved also affect the media and medium choices to be made.

Non-communication or mix-communication are frequent occurrences and are particularly visible in attempts to reach women. This occurs when the socio-economic and communication characteristics of women are ignored in communication strategy design. For instance, media specification may disregard the relative disadvantage of women in education compared with men; the result is a failure to reach women. Even when an appropriate medium is chosen, women's contact with that part of the media which carries the message may be weak. (Knecht, 1985) For instance, the message may be communicated through a medium such as radio which is easily accessible to women, but the programmes intended to reach women may be transmitted at a time when the majority of targeted women are busy.

Another source of communication failure results from selective attention; in other words, the message may not be perceived by the target group for many different reasons. Miscommunication can also result from poor, complicated or inappropriate coding of messages. Many other forms and sources of ineffective communication exist. Therefore, the design of a communication strategy should be responsive to the needs, characteristics and communication patterns of specific target groups.

Development practice and communication

The interrelationship between policy and communication is often not well understood. Communication support is a prerequisite for effective policy formulation. For certain types of policies, communication is also the principle instrument of implementation. For others, it is a means of achieving development objectives fully. Communication is also a key instrument in monitoring and evaluation. This is why "it is remarkable that governments have always (used) acts, decrees, regulations, orders, prohibitions and subsidies as tools, but not information and communication, although it is a tool that has a number of advantages: it is cheaper, faster, more democratic, more individual, (and) more direct." (Schoenmakers, 1985: 4)

Experience shows that the failure to design an adequate communication support strategy is often a major source of delay in the execution of human settlements policies, programmes and projects. It also leads to the emergence of unanticipated negative impacts. Such impacts have been observed by many in association with large-scale resettlement programmes, land redistribution schemes, or integrated regional development efforts, even when they are implemented by reputable development agencies such as the World Bank. (Perrett, 1982; van Dijk, 1983) However, establishing the preferences of the communities to be affected by inundation resulting from the construction of a dam, informing them adequately of the implications of each phase of construction, communicating to different target groups the alternative opportunities they have, and doing so with a view that women and men will be differently impacted by the process, are all important in reducing the problems the communities confront and in adapting to new ways of earning their livelihood. To do so is also important in ensuring new patterns of economic activity in the region and in maximizing the use of the opportunities resulting from settlements investments.

In general, governments entertain one or more of the following communication objectives. This applies across all sectors of government, including ministries and other governmental organizations dealing with the human settlements sector.

(a) Making information public: This information can consist of past or current action, a report of trends or of pipeline investments.

(b) Using information as an instrument in policy formulation and implementation: Here the objective is either to seek information as an input to policy formulation or to ensure the cooperation of the people and of relevant
parties for policy implementation.

(c) Making information available as a service: This information can consist of governmental services available to different groups, guiding the public to ensure that required procedures are followed to gain access to such services, etc.

(d) Using information for public relations: This is one−sided positive information to gain or reinforce support of institutions, select target groups, or the public in general.

"On the whole Governments are not very enthusiastic about communication except through the usual process of speech making, edicts and good coverage by the media of those pronouncements. Slogans also play their part in Government campaigns by TV, radio and posters." (Shaw, 1983: 3)

These types of efforts usually intensify during pre−election periods and reach the press as well as the people through direct personal contacts. This type of public relations activity is necessary for governments to create or maintain the trust of the public. When overall trust in the government is lacking, it is difficult to ensure public participation in specific programmes or projects.

In the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes and projects, governments often communicate with the public in an ad hoc and unsystematic manner. (Sweeney and Leonard, 1983) As they recognize people's rights to be informed, they take more active roles and prepare print materials, audio−visuals, newsletters and periodicals to inform the public of decisions on on−going programmes which are often designed without systematic efforts to secure people's inputs. (Schoenmakers. 1985)

As the role of information is better understood, marketing and advertisement specialists are hired, either to avoid public resentment toward policy decisions or to induce cooperation for their implementation. When the need for popular participation in settlements management is felt and the utility of participatory communication to facilitate a partnership between the people and the government is appreciated, communication is used as a device for policy formulation and execution.

The needs of the poor are basic and often well−known to policy−makers and planners. In lowincome settlements, these consist of improved housing, water, energy, transport and sewerage. The technical and financial possibilities for the provision of these facilities are often so limited that to institute a communication strategy for needs assessment is often viewed as an academic luxury. More difficult tasks involve the allocation of resources between the needs of the privileged and the disadvantaged groups and the choice of alternative settlements management styles. Often the relevant allocations and choices are made on the basis of political processes at work and are communicated through pressure groups.

The distinction between pressing and anticipated needs is based upon the strength and loudness of messages communicated to policy−makers by different segments of a society. The segments which make their voices heard are referred to as pressure groups. Women do not constitute a strong pressure group in most societies; they are also inadequately represented among dominant pressure groups such as political parties. trade unions, professional associations etc.

That some problems are more pressing than others implies that their presence is communicated to governments either by those who suffer from them directly, or by those who are concerned about them for other reasons. The politically dominant segments experience few difficulties in expressing their settlements needs forcefully. They may also demand services for the disadvantaged if the living conditions of the latter directly or indirectly threaten their own lifestyles. Through informal and elaborate political networks of communication, governments become aware of pressing problems. and make choices between them and others. Ensuring that the voice of all those concerned in the relevant decisions is heard and obtaining support for the implementation of the decisions reached, necessitates a more systematic process of communication than that which simply epitomizes the political status quo. The involvement of governmental and non−governmental organizations for women will be essential in the establishment of such a systematic process, otherwise, women's needs may continue to be disregarded even when those of the poor and other disadvantaged groups are considered.

A policy intention is followed by a socio−economic and technical assessment phase which is not divorced from a process of communication. For instance, once a need for road infrastructure is determined and an assessment of the total kilometres of required and affordable roads roughly estimated, their grade, their technology specification, their siting and other characteristics lend themselves to inputs from users, including women residents, traders, vehicle operators. and other concerned parties of the settlements involved.
Likewise, timely inputs from various government departments, local governments, development specialists, contractors, financial institutions, donors, and other relevant institutions and groups will be useful.

Once established, policies require different degrees of dependence on communication inputs at different stages of their implementation. They will also necessitate the institution of different participatory mechanisms. Each policy requires different communication planning for the achievement of its goals and objectives. Unfortunately, objectives, phases, and participatory requirements of policies and programmes are rarely considered when information is gathered and/or disseminated about them; instead, communication occurs either as a public relations activity or in the face of crises.

When communication is deemed useful for assessment of need or for seeking the cooperation of the communities for policy implementation, financial and human resource shortages make its planning difficult. Governments often fail to make the required budget allocations for communication support activities; and since the ability to communicate is viewed as a natural talent of politicians, the need for appropriate staffing is not felt. Even when modest resource allocations are made for development support communication, waste occurs owing to failures to undertake impact assessment and pre−testing before a communication campaign is implemented. If non−communication or mix−communication results from such campaigns, sources of failure are not investigated and new strategies are not instituted; rather, communication is seen as a one−shot activity.

Availability of communications infrastructure does not necessarily imply its use or its proper use in support of settlements development purposes. Superficial and mistaken observations concerning the communication patterns of target groups can easily cause failure of communication activities. For instance, in some countries, the potential use of community−based TV monitors for development information was assessed as inappropriate on the grounds that there were no viewers of the monitors.

"An announced trip was made to four or five villages within 40 kilometres of the capital. The sets were well placed and maintained and the reception excellent. The programs at that time were national news and talks. There were almost no spectators. The local reason was that the visitors had chosen the wrong day and should have come when they were showing Hawaii Five−0." (Show, 1983: 4)

Inaccurate assessment can thus result in insufficient use of the available communications infrastructure or to its use when reception is unlikely to be forthcoming.

The complementary nature of various communication methods and media is also not well understood in the design of support communication for policies and programmes. Often, one method or medium is singled out as sufficient to support broad policies and large−scale programmes. It is also mistakenly assumed that the simultaneous application of more than one method or the delivery of the communication plan through several media consume more time, energy and money. While there is an element of truth in such assumptions, reliance on a single method or medium might well prove to be far more costly in many senses.

Neither well−rehearsed inter−personal communication nor technologically sophisticated media might be sufficient for the attainment of desired communication objectives among target groups. For instance, a film makes a different impact on its viewers depending upon how it is shown. Its production is almost always expensive: but its transmission in an environment inadequate to generate sufficient interest means total waste of resources employed in its production. If a more receptive environment can be created by complementing the film with inter−personal communication, the additional resources required need not be spared.

This can be illustrated by a case. When the Indian "rural development by satellite" effort was initiated, communities in which the programme was tested showed little interest. A young couple was employed to introduce the programme. After the experimental year was over, the directorate in charge of the programme received hundreds of letters from villagers, expressing their appreciation for the couple who had become close friends with many in the test area. (Shaw, 1983) Experiences of other countries also show that complementing inter−personal communication with such simple tools as slides and flip−charts can help turn a lecture or superimposed directive into a conversation and, thus, ensure success.

The effectiveness of a communication support effort can be enhanced through many ways, including proper identification of the target groups most directly concerned with the selected issues, utilization of media in a complementary manner, assessment of potential and actual impacts of alternative communication methods, balancing of the use of traditional and new channels of communication, appropriate choice of messages, etc. On the whole, messages that are more familiar to the recipients are better understood and accepted. Information on subject matter of professional interest to people, for instance, is better retained than those of a
general nature.

Similarly, agricultural news is more relevant to farmers than it would be to lawyers.

Familiarity creates greater interest, especially in cases where the purpose is to create a sustained change in settlements-related behaviour. Research has indicated that local and regional broadcasting of television and radio serve better as programme and project support communication. While national broadcasting might support an overall policy, it cannot be sufficiently specific to address regional and local issues. Past experience shows that the more decentralized a broadcasting process, the more its potential for programme support. Indeed, as discussed below, the success of the women's alternative media movement might be attributable to the fact that the media are usually produced at the local level by local women as devices to share experience and knowledge.

The familiarity of a message or the availability of and access to the media are important but cannot ensure effectiveness of a communication effort. There are many reasons for this: one is of special concern here. Inadequate knowledge of the communication characteristics of target groups as well as of their knowledge, motivation, attitudes and/or behaviour will hinder effective communication planning. It is not unusual for planners to make false assumptions concerning women. Indeed, women's projects are often planned without factual information about their socio-economic characteristics. In the specific case of communication planning, information about their communication networks, media access, as well as their attitudes and behaviour intended to be changed are inadequately researched. As a result motivations which may not exist may be intended to be altered, or messages totally unfamiliar and unacceptable may form the thrust of a communication effort.

The development experiences of the past decades provide ample evidence of women's exclusion from policies, programmes and projects as a result of incorrect assumptions made of their roles in society and of stereotyping. This is why there is need both to change negative stereotyping of women in the media and to research the actual knowledge, motivation, attitudes and behaviour women have. When such research is undertaken, even in a preliminary and an informal manner, very different types of facts than those popularly assumed to characterize women may be found and wastage of resources on inappropriate communication campaigns can be avoided.

Despite the fact that development support communication has a strong base in commercial advertisement and marketing, common techniques employed by marketing specialists are often not used by development specialists. Just as research is a critical component of an effective advertisement and marketing effort, so is pre-testing. In the commercial world this is done regardless of the adequacy of information on the motivational and behavioural characteristics of the target groups. Through pre-testing, the effectiveness of each component of the communication strategy chosen to change these motivations and behaviour can be put to test. In the development field pre-testing is often neglected to save resources; the result is their wastage. The realization of potential wastage is now being more widely shared. In Jamaica, for instance, a population communication campaign was prepared by a marketing firm under the direction of women's organizations. The pre-testing and consequent elimination of the unacceptable communication materials resulted in the success of the campaign. It also demonstrated to other countries that pre-testing communication plans created efficiency. (Shaw, 1983)

Slum and squatter-area upgrading policies and programmes, investments in dams, in highways or in electrification programmes, creation of housing finance funds, land-distribution or land-development schemes, all require monitoring of their impacts. This, again, involves a communication process, information collection and analyses. This process also requires systematic attention to representation of the different segments of the targeted populations. For instance, in a community development effort, impacts are either not investigated or are randomly established through male community development officers casually establishing the opinions of the adult men of the communities. The exclusion of women and children distorts the monitoring process and results in inappropriate or partial inputs to policy or programme execution from such a process.

A well-designed communication strategy can significantly reduce the costs of monitoring based on extensive household surveys and lengthy data analyses. In the particular case of women, it is worth noting that governmental and non-governmental organizations for women can play critical intermediary roles by providing relevant information and by the monitoring, through the networks they have established, of programme impacts on different categories of women.
Many countries suffer from an inadequacy of data pertaining to their settlements. Despite many international
decisions to remedy the situation; gender–specific data are unavailable in most countries, especially with
respect to the settlements sector. As a result, very little specific information is available on the contributions of
women to settlements management and on the problems faced by different categories of women in urban and
rural areas. There are several major sources of information deficiency with respect to settlements. (UNCHS
(Habitat) 1983) First, governments have only recently begun to incorporate settlement issues in their national
plans. Secondly, explicit policy formulation for settlements development is still of little interest to most
developing countries. Thirdly, concepts involved in settlements planning are not well defined. Fourthly,
existing data are not sufficiently desegregated by settlements and by segments within them. Fifthly, available
data often exclude areas outside the formal segments of metropolises and principle urban areas: information
on self–built urban and rural communities is scarce.

The general unavailability of gender–specific data is further exacerbated with respect to settlements. Indeed,
there has not been any analytical effort to specify the essential indicators of the roles of women in
settlements. Much has been said about the acute problems women face in access to housing finance, to
residential land, to construction sector employment, to training and education and to decision– and
policy–making. (Kudat, 1986; UNCHS (Habitat) 1988 a, b, c, d, e) Yet, information is lacking at both national
and local levels on the actual access of women to housing finance and to credit for entrepreneurial activities:
on the relative disadvantage women have in land tenure, on problems women encounter in finding rental
accommodation, etc. Even less is known about the distribution of women by settlement segments. Do, for
instance, more of the poor households headed by women live in deteriorated inner cities than in peripheral
squatter areas? Do such households have greater difficulties in negotiating with powerful landlords of the slum
and squatter areas?

This vacuum in knowledge of settlements, and particularly, of the problems women face in participating in
their management, is one of the major reasons for the visible absence of gender– sensitive policies and
programmes in the settlements sectors.

Strengthening of the gender–specific information base for human settlements policy development is, thus, a
priority.

In the specification of the qualitative and quantitative data required for gender–sensitive settlements planning,
governmental and non–governmental organizations for women can be mobilized. As mentioned, they can also
be useful in the collection of the required data. Particularly in situations where systematic information
gathering is difficult and costly, the support of these organizations can be critical. They can communicate
critical qualitative information to settlements policy–makers on the pressing problems women face and on the
gender–specific impacts of existing policies and programmes to facilitate policy formulation, execution and
monitoring. Such an informal approach is particularly advisable to avoid unnecessarily ambitious research
procedures. Too often “elaborate, quantitative social science tools are used in situations where simple
interview, and bringing groups of people together to discuss the questions would suffice. (Sweeney and
Leonard, 1983: 20)

The problems faced by policy–makers in developing countries, owing to the shortage of adequate information,
is more than matched by the information that the majority of settlements dwellers lack. Women are particularly
deprived of such information; they neither have information on settlements conditions, nor on opportunities
that might be available to them to improve their living conditions. Also lacking information on alternative
actions that they can take, women often fail to voice their problems and formulate their demands. This
deficiency in the settlements field is partially being remedied by recent activities of women's organizations;
but, their current efforts are rather marginal and are confined to the compilation and dissemination of
information on women's legal entitlements, credit opportunities and organizational matters.

Although it is important to strengthen the information base for settlements development and management and
to do so with a view to women's roles in them, the intention here is not to detail the required information and
the methods for its compilation, storage and analysis. Rather, it is to stress the value and potential benefits of
the communication of available information between women, men, communities, leaders, organizations, and
local and central governments. The process of data compilation cannot be divorced from its use. If the intent
is for its utilization for gender–sensitive settlements policy, appropriate measures ought to be taken to provide
support communication for its development. In other words, settlements information ought to include gender–
specific communication Information on target groups as well as on policy–makers, business–people, health
experts, transport specialists, and others concerned with settlements development. Therefore, there is need

Information on women in human settlements

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10
Development support: communication to enhance the participation of women in settlements management

Policy-makers know little about the relationship between women and development. Development change agents, including health personnel, agricultural extension officers, family planning specialists, and settlements specialists, often have inadequate and biased information about the roles of women in development. In the settlements sectors, for instance, women are viewed merely as consumers and automatic beneficiaries of shelter and infrastructure development activities. As already mentioned, makers of settlements policy do not yet appreciate the importance of communication and implement programmes without sufficient knowledge of the people involved.

Women experience greater difficulties than do men in establishing a dialogue with settlements planners to help define their contributions to settlements management and to acquire equitable benefits from development. The dominance of male professionals and decision-makers, which is particularly visible in the settlements sectors, blocks the channels through which women could communicate their expectations and learn about their opportunities. The net effect of all this is the failure to benefit from the contributions of women in the formulation and execution of settlements policies.

Despite a long-lasting process of exclusion from mainstream development activities, women are interested in and even avid for relevant information. Indeed, a communication expert notes that

"reflecting on the present communication situation it is possible that the arrival of women on the scene is going to be of great help to the overall picture." (Shaw, 1983:16)

An expert group meeting held by UNCHS (Habitat) likewise concludes that "in health, population and communication projects in various countries extremely able women are doing progressive and innovative work. Women seem to be more enthusiastic, more ready to fight for the right to communicate, more ready to envisage practical approaches to influencing people, than men." (UNCHS (Habitat) 1983: 23)

One of the experts at this meeting even suggests that perhaps insufficient attention is given to how men could be persuaded to become interested in development projects.

"Of course they attend film shows, see posters. are given talks at farmers' clubs and other gatherings of mutually interested other men. But there is no regular base like the home where they can be known to be receptive, no regular meetings such as the active women's organizations everywhere, no other men exhorting them to take action. Influence a woman and you influence a family is an old saying but how to enter the minds of men? There is need for much innovative thinking in this field. (Shaw. 1983:" 16)

Simply put, the communication experience of many countries can be summarized as one in which women and women's groups have intensified communication among themselves, while the governments have had difficulties in reaching the people, and particularly the women, to elicit their needs and to provide support for their initiatives. Increasingly, the need for support communication to achieve objectives of community participation projects is articulated and concrete steps are now regularly being taken. (Lohman and Muller, 1986) However, the concern over the active participation of women in community development efforts and that over relevant communication support activities are still in their infancy. Clearly, communities need support to articulate their needs effectively to policy-makers: similarly, women need support to articulate their views to communities.

The participation of women is essential in low-cost housing and infrastructure development. (United Nations Radio, 1980 But the information/communication links women have with the communities they live in and those with the outside world are often weak. The communities are themselves severely constrained in establishing communication with policy-makers. An overall lack of a communication component, on the one hand, and gender-insensitivity built into the existing communication efforts, on the other, clearly contribute to the exclusion of women from many low-cost housing and community development efforts.
There are many examples of communication–specific difficulties women have in effective participation in settlements programmes. For instance, in low–income communities of Paraguay, half the women interviewed in the context of a community development programme complained that their lack of general information on shelter issues constituted a serious obstacle to their ability to improve their housing conditions; only 16 per cent of the men interviewed suffered from the same problem. (Sorock and others, 1984) In a slum in Sri Lanka, information was made available on an upgrading programme through public meetings; women were barred from attending these meetings in which issues of great concern to them were discussed. (Fernando, 1985) In Solanda, the difficulties women had in communicating with officials and in providing the extensive documentation that was required caused many interested women applicants to withdraw from projects. (Buvinic, 1984) In other cases, poor communication between service providers and women discouraged women's participation in low–cost housing projects. (Moser, 1985) Programmes are also designed on the basis of mistaken information of peoples ability to contribute labour without consideration of the multiple workload assumed by the possible presence of large numbers of women who head households among the target populations. (Blayney and Lycette, 1983; Machado, 1984) In other instances, eligibility requirements are communicated to the people concerned in evening meetings which women with children cannot attend. (UNCHS (Habitat), 1980.

On the whole, the exclusion of women from communication, as in other sector activities, has several root causes. First, stereotyped images of women held by society prevent their full participation in communication policies and programmes. Indeed, these images are introduced and/or reinforced by the media. Secondly, their relative poverty and lack of resources (income, education, information etc.) hinder their access to a broad range of media. Thirdly, the lack of awareness of women's issues creates mistaken assumptions that all policies and programmes, including those dealing with communication, automatically benefit women: the sex–seggregated nature of communication structures is rarely recognized. Fourthly, communication programmes are not designed with the specific intention of reaching women and men equally: rather, gender–specific implications of mainstream programmes are not considered and special programmes which often reinforce stereotyping are introduced for women.

If communication efforts are to ensure the full participation of women and to enhance the participation of women in, among others, settlements sectors, stereotyping that directly affects such participation ought to be analysed and eliminated. This analysis includes the identification of impacts on targeted women, the specification of how stereotyping affects their relationship with different segments of the society, and the determination of impacts on the ability of women to gain access to relevant resources and other aspects of their participation in policies and programmes for which support communication is planned. If leaders, planners and policy–makers are the ones influenced by such stereotyping, communication efforts will include awareness– creation among them: for them and for others who hold negative images, incentives for attitudinal change will have to be designed. A communication plan aiming to eliminate stereotyping blocking the participation of women in policies and programmes initiates action for desired changes. This action can consist, for instance, of organizing facts and figures challenging the stereotyped information. These and other efforts to reduce or eliminate stereotyping are then complemented with those specific to guiding and enhancing the participation of women in the particular settlements policies and programmes under consideration.

Throughout the literature, two themes continually emerge as the root causes of failure of many housing programmes. First is the failure to take into account the needs, preferences and capabilities of the people. The second is the lack of co–ordination and co–operation between different ministries, public and private organizations and other agencies concerned with the programme. While these factors reduce the success of housing programmes, in general. they particularly hinder the participation of women in them.

For instance, housing schemes are created in new settlement areas without regard to the needs of women to have access to employment: when women lose their jobs large investments in housing schemes may have to be wasted as a result of target groups' reluctance to occupy the communities built for them. In other cases, regulations exclude the possibility for women to meet their need for supplementary income. In Kenya, for instance. multi–purpose use of homes was not allowed: as a result women were unable to generate rental or other types of income from within their homes and were put into a position of not being able to pay back the housing loan. (Nimpuna–Parente, 1985) Thus, the failure to take into consideration the specific needs and preferences of women, and to recognize their potential contributions often pushes women out of programmes and projects. Similarly, the failure to co–ordinate the programme with other agencies concerned causes delays in implementation of complementary programmes which are often essential to women's ability to survive in sites chosen for housing programmes.
Formulation and implementation of human settlements policies and programmes require extensive inter-ministerial, inter-departmental or inter-agency co-ordination at both the central and local governmental levels.

"It will be necessary for example to ensure that when extensions are made to an existing settlement by the ministry of housing, roads are also built by the ministry of transport." (UNCHS (Habitat) 1983: 17)

Thus, in a women-friendly approach, not only, for instance, are housing extensions sensitive to women's needs and potential contributions, but transport planning also reflects the same sensitivity.

Just as inter-ministerial and inter-organizational co-ordination and communication is necessary in the formulation and implementation of settlements policies, intra-ministerial coordination and communication will have to be established to ensure efficiency. Again, when a systematic consideration of the participation of women in policies is desired, special attention ought to be paid to communication and staff training. In addition, relevant decisions will have to be shared with local branches of ministries and mechanisms be established to receive inputs from local levels.

The institutionalization of women's concerns in settlements development and management and the establishment of required horizontal and vertical communication mechanisms necessitate a strong political commitment. Enhanced participation of women among the ranks of policy-makers and planners in the relevant organizations, sufficient budgetary allowances, appropriate staffing, and a well-designed staff training programme.

As has already been mentioned, a prerequisite to targeting women within a communication policy is the existence of a human settlements policy which aims at enhancing the participation of women in settlements development and management as beneficiaries and contributors. Governments encounter severe difficulties in the formulation and implementation of comprehensive human settlements policies. These have already been detailed in many key UNCHS (Habitat) publications, including the Global Report of Human Settlements (1986). Over and above these difficulties, making policies women-friendly or gender-aware requires new approaches, methods and practices. However, integrating a strong communication support component into such policies, helps their implementation and facilitates women's incorporation in them.

The integration of a systematic concern with gender issues in mainstream development sectors usually follows several stages. At early stages, women may be considered on an ad-hoc basis; at the next stage, women's issues may be systematically considered in traditional welfare-oriented programmes. As more progress is made, an awareness of women's contribution to some of the key mainstream sectors may rise and promote the recruitment of specialists dealing with women's issues. Ultimately, the participation of women in policy, programme and project formulation and implementation across sectors may be sought at all levels as contributors to and beneficiaries of development.

When settlements development efforts aim at enhancing the participation of women in settlements management, the accompanying development support communication may assume the following objectives:

(a) Create awareness of the multiple roles women play in the development and management of settlements: raise consciousness of the need to ensure full participation of women in settlements management as beneficiaries and contributors;

(b) Develop and re-inforce positive and favourable images of women in settlements management;

(c) Change unfavourable, stereotypical images of women which hinder an adequate policy response to their needs and which prevent the participation of women in the sector as planners, decision-makers, professionals, and skilled and semi-skilled workers;

(d) Create or increase a willingness among policy-makers, private employers, local leaders, communities, development specialists, and, among women and men, for positive and sustained action, including education and training, to ensure equitable participation of women in settlements policies as beneficiaries and contributors;

(e) Stimulate action and co-operation between central and local governments, non-governmental organizations, communities and individuals to facilitate the participation of women in settlements management.
Given these overall objectives, development support communication can be planned specifically and be incorporated at the outset of each policy, programme, and project. Such planning normally involves the following:

(a) Specification of policy, programme or project targets with a specific view to their implications for the participation of women in them as contributors and beneficiaries;

(b) Specification of communication targets in support of these policies and programmes and including among these targets an explicit objective of reaching women;

(c) Specification of the target group(s) and ensuring, as appropriate, inclusion of different categories of women;

(d) Definition of the underlying messages as well as the concrete messages for each target group in a consistent manner; ensuring that messages are appropriate for targeted groups of women;

(e) Specification of the type of communication (e.g. interpersonal, non-personal, etc) appropriate for each target group, including women;

(f) Choice of media through consideration of the relative access of and the effectiveness for each target group with a particular view to special groups of women;

(g) Choice of communication channels and intermediaries through consideration of established networks of communication that women use;

(h) Time planning, with a view to the multiple responsibilities women bear in society;

(i) Budgeting, making provision to institute special mechanisms for reaching different target groups of women;

(j) Monitoring and evaluation, with a view to establishing policy and programme impacts on targeted women.

Support communication for a policy or a programme requires careful planning to ensure response to women. However, unless such a response is part of the policies for which communication support is planned, the inclusion of women among communication targets will be merely accidental. Until a firm political will is established for women-friendly settlements planning, communication planning will be one-way, bottom-up and general. It will be one in which women and women's groups as well as other concerned institutions accelerate their communication activities in order to create an awareness of the necessity for women to participate in settlements management. Once such an awareness is established their work will not stop; rather, support will have to be given to communication experts so that appropriate measures can be designed to ensure the inclusion of women among communication targets.

In all communication – whether it aims at informing the public of planned activities, using information for policy, programme or project formulation and implementation, providing information as a public service, or for public relations – reaching women necessitates specific consideration of their individual and group characteristics, including those pertaining to communication. When the target specification fails to note the differences between women and other target groups or, rather, assumes men to be the primary targets of development activities, women are left beyond reach.

These differences and others translate themselves into specific action for a communication planner. If the majority of the targeted women are, for instance, formally employed, daytime radio programmes will be inappropriate to affect them; similarly, if they are poor and deprived of television, making information public through TV will deprive women of such information. If communities are highly hierarchical in their organization, and if women's interaction with community leaders is restricted, sole reliance on these leaders for information will inadequately reflect women's concerns in policies. If the direct contact of women with government offices is limited, providing information on credit opportunities, on land-development schemes, on public health programmes or on training opportunities primarily from these offices will make it difficult for women to receive relevant information. Thus, whatever the communication objectives might be, reaching women necessitates gender- and context- specific communication planning. When the need for such planning is not recognized, the participation of women cannot be secured and their needs cannot be met. As such, the success of settlements development efforts will, at best, be partial.
“Thinking of women as a homogeneous mass can be as potentially dangerous...as not recognizing sex differences in the audience”. (Perrett 1985: 23) Even in small communities, important differences exist between young and old women, educated and uneducated women, poor and rich women. There may also be communication barriers between different groups of women. For instance, in some communities young and old women may not be allowed to discuss certain subjects, including population issues. If, in such communities young women are targeted for population activities, it may be ineffective and inappropriate to use older women as promoters even though the latter may be the traditional organizers and leaders of women's groups. (Hilsum, 1985) Similarly, differences in the access of different groups of women to the media will have to be considered in communication planning. If younger generations of women have greater rates of literacy, they may be reached through written media.

Certain categories of women are particularly disadvantaged in articulating their problems and in demanding solutions. Among other measures, communication support can be cost−effective. For instance, in Sri Lanka, a growing number of women head households. These women, unable to voice their grievances through a cohesive body, either stay at home with their parents and close relatives in extremely overcrowded situations. rent dwellings of the most inadequate quality. or end up in shanties or makeshift dwellings. (Shelter News, 1987) Settlements policy−makers in this country have recently noted, however, that specially designed information centres can not only provide vital information related services to these and other vulnerable groups, but can also provide qualitative and quantitative information about their needs to administrators so that assistance programmes or appropriate policies can be formulated. These policy−makers also noted that within the framework of a community participation programme, such as the on−going Million Houses Programme, vulnerable groups have a better chance for participation in programme design and implementation. (Shelter News, 1987)

To be effective, a communication strategy must make room for country−, culture− and situation−specific conditions. This is especially so if women are to be targeted and if a community participation approach is adopted. The type of community participation to be promoted in a country will depend upon general political, economic and cultural conditions and on conditions specific to localities identified for policy implementation. By the same token, the type of participation to be promoted for women in the context of community development efforts will depend upon such conditions as well as on the characteristics of women at the project site. Culture−, site−, and time−specific considerations must, therefore, be taken into consideration at the outset of the design of a support communication strategy.

The existing communication barriers between the policy− makers and communities, on the one hand, and community leaders and the people. on the other, are equally important parameters to be considered in the design of communication strategies specifically aiming to increase the visibility of women. Disregard of dominant power structures can particularly jeopardize the chances of socially disadvantaged groups being accepted by planners and community leaders and benefitting from development activities. This is especially so when prevailing social values and behaviour need to be modified in order to allow equitable participation to women in settlements management.

Drawing a communication strategy specifically aimed at reaching women also necessitates an understanding of the communication networks that women use in different cultures. These networks, whether formal or informal. simple or sophisticated. also vary across cultures. They range from computers and televisions, to "coconut telegraphs" and "whistle circles".

"Whatever the form, these communication networks are essential elements to successful development strategies and to the improved status of women .... It is important to recognize that, depending on the subject of the news and who originates it – information systems are often sex− segregated. For both women and men, equal access to information is rare. Women, thus, have developed their own methods of sharing in formation." (Huston, 1985: 14)

The methods that women have developed for networking also vary from one culture to another; moreover, women belonging to different socio−economic groups within a culture use different mechanisms for sharing information. At the same time, different networks will be operating for different purposes. For instance, networks through which women seek marketing information are different from those providing medical advice. Similarly, networks are established with the rest of the community and the outside world on different subjects. The knowledge of these networks and of their operational bases is important in building channels in support of specific policies and programmes.

Understanding the mechanisms through which women receive and disseminate information is generally useful in the design of development support communication. Indeed, in some instances, targeting women for
communication activities might make it easy for the rest of the community to accept a policy either because the resistance of women might be important to eliminate in order to achieve policy objectives fully or because women may be among the strong interest groups. For instance, in Ghana, many power groups, including the fetish high priests and the market women resisted the implementation of a resettlement of a fishing village to allow the construction of a modern harbour in their traditional village. The resistance continued nearly seven years until a resettlement team was appointed to handle the issue. Their communication efforts brought attitude changes and success in project execution. The evaluation of the programme showed that if the powerful market women, as well as the other powerful groups, had been provided with adequate Information through appropriate networks and in a timely manner, the resistance would either not have occurred or would not have occurred to the same degree.

Just as powerful groups of women could be helpful in reducing community resistance to policies and programmes, grassroots women's organizations can help secure community involvement and enhance the active participation of women and youth in implementation. For example, a community development project in Hyderabad reached out for non-governmental organizations for women in order to foster community co-operation. At the outset, a number of income-generating activities were established, including manufacturing co-operatives. (UNICEF, 1982) Community priorities included such activities as day-care and pre-school centres and were expressed through women's organizations. These provided women with the needed support for gainful Involvement in Income-generating activities. Through these facilities and with the assistance of grassroots women's organizations, other programme inputs, such as a government nutrition programme, were channelled to the young children.

Development support communication is a time- and cost-effective way of enhancing popular participation in settlements policies and programmes. It is particularly so for involving women in development since the institution of support communication for a given policy or programme will change stereotypical images and, thus, facilitate the participation of women in other types of programmes as well. But the task is not an easy one. If the experience is not generally available, the institution of support communication even for specific programme and project situations necessitates a comprehensive analysis of the communication structures characterizing the community. As new ones are added to early experiences, tasks will be eased.

At the outset, planners are required to establish many factors in order to facilitate the participation of women in policies and programmes through communication. They have to base their plans on the recognition of the problems women face in having access to the means of communication and in establishing effective channels of communication with communities, leaders, planners and policy-makers. They have to establish the extent and nature of stereotyping and how it affects the participation of women in different types of activities. They have to understand how much stereotyping is reinforced and how it can be changed. They have to identify the channels through which women usually receive information, and understand the functioning of the communication networks women have already established. They also have to understand that the process of integrating women in development is not simply a by-product of good intentions; rather it requires financial and human resources, and calls for appropriate institutional and organizational arrangements supported by adequate training and education. While some may view the energy to be devoted to these as "losses," the relative and the absolute gains that will accrue from such a strategy are significant and can be specified for concrete situations in a tangible manner.

It is important to realize that a communication planner will not be starting from scratch; rather, valuable insight is provided by many aspects of the women's movement for consideration in even the most specific types of strategies to be designed. By analysing the sex-segregated nature of communication networks, by showing the multiplicity of informal networks women have developed for different purposes, by insisting on the need to alter negative images of women to enhance their participatory potential in a society, pointing to the implications of women's under-representation in mainstream media and its impact of stereotyping, by illustrating the difference in access of women and men to the media, by experimenting with alternative means of communication, and by insisting on the need to enhance the participation of women in settlements management, the women's movement has already contributed significantly to the process of participatory communication. If this contribution is understood, a great many pitfalls can be avoided and fruitful strategies may be established to facilitate the participation of women in settlements management through communication support. In what follows, an attempt is made to summarize some of the many useful observations emerging from the women's movement that can be of specific benefit to communication planners.
Potential contribution of the women's movement to communication support for human settlements development and management

The concepts of communication and communication support for development, the advantages of incorporating communication in settlements management to promote people's participation, and in particular women's participation, and the need to adopt a gender aware approach to communication planning have been detailed in the previous sections. In the following section, selected aspects of the women's movement within the framework of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development, Peace will be reviewed, This will show that a great deal of relevance to the subject of this paper has been achieved by women throughout the world. This achievement will facilitate the integration of women-friendly support communication activities in settlements management.

A. Women's view of communication

Women and women's groups have been concerned with various aspects of communication for many years. Before we present an historical review of their concern within the United Nations context, their principal observations can be summarized as follows:

(a) In many national contexts the media ore centrally controlled and exclude the access of people to policies, programmes and projects in general, and of women in particular;

(b) Media have been used primarily to reinforce or to create stereotypical and distorted images of women; a similar role has been played by educational and training materials;

(c) Advertisements have further damaged the image of women; the increasing involvement of transnational firms in the media has had a particularly damaging effect on the image of women conveyed through the media;

(d) Women's viewpoints have not been explored by the media, nor have the mainstream media pursued topics of relevance to women; i

(e) Women have not been able to make use of the potential offered by the media in their quest for equality and full participation in society;

(f) The role of the traditional media in perpetuating stereotyped images of women has been overlooked;

(g) Women have been under-represented in the media; those employed occupy low-paid, low-status, uncreative jobs;

(h) Women's exclusion from the science and technology sectors has hindered their participation in mainstream media as well as their progress in developing alternatives.

B. The outset of the United Nations decade for women

The interrelationship between the status of women and the role of information and communication was recognized at the outset of the United Nations Decade for Women. At that time, the low level of participation by women in the mainstream media was viewed to be both a symptom and a cause of their disadvantaged position in society which was attributed, among other factors, to the prevalence of stereotyped images.

Two major themes have been emphasized by the international community and by a large number of women's organizations during the past two decades. The first theme is the portrayal of women and of women's issues by the media; in this connection, changing the negative images of women in society is a prerequisite to the equal political life. The second theme centres around the participation of women in communication industries and in communication policy and decision-making; in this connection, increasing the participation of women in the media is essential in the institution of required changes.

In the context of the United Nations Decade for Women as well as within the framework of women's
movements that preceded the Decade, issues concerning the significance of communication technology for women, and the role of communication in development were discussed. They were given less importance than those pertaining to stereotyping and representation in the media. However, issues dealing with the design and implementation of information/communication strategy to facilitate the incorporation of women’s views in development policies and to enhance the participation of women in policy, programme and project execution have not been considered.

During the 1985 World Conference, a number of recommendations were adopted concerning women and communication. Consideration of the importance of the mass media in determining the attitudes and values of the community and in affecting social change, and the awareness of the potential of the mass media to institute new attitudes regarding the roles of women and men in society, led to an emphasis on the need to alter the stereotyped images of women.

The Conference requested the "Governments and responsible organizations, as appropriate, to promote and encourage, in the mass communication media of their countries, the projection of a dignified and positive image of women, divesting them of their role as vehicles for publicity and as targets for the sale of consumer goods, with a view to bringing about changes in the attitudes and ways of thinking of both men and women that will be conducive to securing equality and integrity of women and their full participation in society." (United Nations, 1967: 93)

To facilitate the elimination of stereotyped images of women and to ensure participation of women in all aspects of social and economic life on an equal footing to men, the Conference also invited a "critical and creative participation of women in all systems of mass communication, at the programming, production, distribution, reception and consumer levels." (United Nations, 1976: 93)

The role of information was considered by the Conference specifically with regard to population research. Relevant recommendations adopted included research into the economic, social and demographic benefits that might be derived from the integration of women in development, on the ways in which urban development influences the roles of women, and on the conditions of life and opportunities for participation in development. The need for information as well as for relevant training in areas other than population was not stressed, but was implicit in the proceedings of the Conference. In response to these considerations, a separate United Nations institute, INSTRAW, was established to conduct research and training for the participation of women in development.

During the first half of the Decade, the United Nations system sponsored over 12 regional and international meetings on women and communication. In 1979 four meetings preparatory to the Mid-Decade Conference were held. In these regional meetings the importance of the mass media in promoting the role of women in society was stressed. The Mid-Decade World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women was held in Copenhagen in 1980. A Report on Information and Communication as Development Resources for the Advancement of Women was included among the Conference documents for consideration of the Member States. Although this report emphasized the need for an elaboration of a more detailed and more co-ordinated programme by the United Nations system for the full use of mass communication media, with particular emphasis on the use of communication as a development component, the Conference did not deal specifically with the role of communication in the improvement of the status of women.

The Programme of Action adopted by the Mid-Decade Conference stressed the institution of new attitudes and elimination of prejudices in the achievement of legal and developmental targets. It also stated that the provision of equal rights, development services and opportunities will not ensure their availability for women unless supportive measures, including those with regard to information and communication, were taken.

C. Information

In subsequent years, efforts of United Nations bodies and agencies to gather information for policy guidance and for increasing women’s participation in development through education and training has intensified. These were complemented by efforts to communicate the relevant information to governments and other concerned organizations. Systematic attempts were made to accelerate the compilation of gender-specific data throughout the world. A wide variety of research activities was also undertaken to establish the situation of women and the problems they face in social, economic and political participation as equal partners.
The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women also worked intensively to document and change the legal frameworks hindering the ability of women to attain equality with men. This Committee included information/communication among its specific concerns. At the same time, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system specified their information needs and sought ways and means of gathering gender–specific data as inputs to planning in sector activities of relevance to them.

The United Nations system was not working alone. Indeed, the work undertaken by individual governments at the national level was equally significant. Special governmental departments or ministries, subsequently referred to as the "national machinery," were established in many countries to gather information on women's issues. These institutions also monitored the mass media and the educational media to ensure elimination of stereotypical images of women; they have guided and/or contributed to efforts to design mechanisms and to establish channels to convey positive images of women. In many countries, the "national machinery" co–ordinated the work of the non–governmental organizations for women and approached policy–makers of mainstream development sectors to induce desirable changes in the status of women.

In some countries, research and educational institutions were established with the specific task of gathering information on women's issues with a view to designing new–systems of education conducive to the improvement of the status of women. (Ashworth and Bonnerjea, 1985) By the end of the Decade women's studies programmes were established in a large number of higher educational institutions around the world. These institutions have undertaken major theoretical, historical and socio–economic research on women's issues. Some of these institutions, especially those in the developing countries, have worked closely with the "national machinery" and contributed to the work of other national organizations seeking gender–specific information. Through this collaboration national women's research institutions were able to contribute to gender–aware policy development and to provide feedback for policy implementation.

During the same period, there has been an enormous increase in the formation of nongovernmental organizations for women. These have aimed at gathering information on the disadvantaged situation of women and at positive action to promote their equal participation in development and peace. These organizations helped increase the visibility of women's issues through primarily qualitative research and have shared their results with women, women's organizations, and with other national and international organizations. In section F below, more detailed information on the communication activities of these organizations is provided.

The global women's movement has been a slow but steady process of information gathering and communication. Women's organizations, individual women workers, researchers, teachers, communicators, all experimented with alternative ways of making their problems known and sought information for solutions that allowed women to benefit from development on an equal basis to men. Although the experience women gained in networking, organization, research and communication offered a rare opportunity to policy–makers to pull women into the core of development activities, there has been a failure to tap this resource. However, as already summarized, a visible increase in the awareness of the contribution of women to settlements management has already started; a similar awareness of the importance of development support communication is underway in such sectors as earth, population, and agriculture. Currently, information is sought by large numbers of women and women's organizations with regard both to settlements and to communication. This information will, no doubt, be useful for mechanisms of ensuring the participation of women in settlements management.

D. Review and appraisal of the progress achieved in the status of women in communication and the media during the United Nations decade for women

In 1984, in an effort to evaluate the progress achieved regarding the status of women during the Decade, the United Nations developed and distributed a questionnaire to governments. One part of the questionnaire dealt with women in communication and the media. Responses were received from 77 governments and the results were summarized in document A/CONF.116/5/Add.5 of the World Conference on Women. (United Nations, 1984) Accordingly:

(a) A slight majority of the responding governments recoded having adopted specific policies and guidelines for the promotion of women in the media. These included anti–sexist legislation, codes governing portrayals of women by the media, directives for promoting employment of women in the media and media programmes run by women. "An interesting finding ... of the survey concerned the extremely recent and firm position on women's rights taken by a number of Northern European countries." (United Nations, 1984:3) For instance,
the Government of Denmark set up an equality Committee in 1981 to raise the level of awareness of women's equality in radio. The Association of Women's Rights in Switzerland persuaded the broadcasting organizations to ensure participation of women in committees and among the staff; it also influenced the decisions to include drama programmes with the discrimination they face. Norway agreed to give preferential treatment to women candidates applying for broadcasting jobs. Czechoslovakia. Denmark, Indonesia, Mexico and the Netherlands were the other countries practicing affirmative action for women in the media.

(b) Governments responding to the survey cited a number of obstacles to the achievement of significant progress in the improvement of the status of women in the media. Most frequently mentioned among these were the prevalence of patriarchal attitudes in society and among the policy-makers, the lack of political will, and the lack of funds for the production of local women's programmes.

(c) Governments were asked whether studies of the image of women in the media, including school textbooks, were conducted. Only half of the responding governments provided an affirmative answer. These revealed that women were often portrayed as mothers, wives, or as sex symbols. Advertisements exploited the image of women and concentrated on their physical appearances. Thirty-eight governments pointed to some improvement in image of women conveyed through the media since the start of the United Nations Decade for Women, while 24 governments reported an unaltered situation in this respect. The changes often dealt with more frequent portrayals of women as professionals and a broader treatment of equality issues. Some countries pointed out that sexism had taken more subtle forms and that visual and written phonoigraphy and media themes of violence against women had increased.

(d) An effort was also made to identify the extent of the involvement of women in the media. Since 1975, only 13 countries had women in directorial positions in the media. But. most countries reported an improvement of the female–to–male ratio of media personnel both at the senior and general employee levels. However, out of the total 77 responding countries, 27 did not experience progress in this ratio. As already mentioned, only 7 countries had an affirmative action policy. Also, only 9 countries designed special professional training courses exclusively for women in the media. "The diverse, regional, political, economic and cultural spread of these countries, however, suggest that the idea could be developed further." (United Nations, 1984: 6)

(e) Twenty countries provided analyses of women's press and broadcasting programmes. Such programmes played an important role, generating information and discussion on women's issues.

(f) In 10 countries, research was undertaken on the advancement of women in the media. The results were provided by only two of these countries: Denmark and Italy. In both, there was a clear relative lack of opportunity for women to advance.

(g) The United Nations survey sought information on alternative media. The development of journals for women and of the feminist press were investigated. Nearly all of the responding governments mentioned the presence of a press for women, although not necessarily a feminist press. The positive role of this press to familiarize the public with the true value of the contributions of women to society, to deal with critical problems faced by women, and to generate valuable information was acknowledged.

(h) The United Nations report on Communication and the Media concluded that "women's rights in regard to the media, with the exception of a very few countries, are still far from being secured. Women themselves are not always aware of the issues ... The fact that information about women is deficient is a factor which erases them from history." (United Nations, 1984: 9)

As a separate review undertaken by UNESCO prior to the holding of the 1985 World Conference on Women also concluded that during the second half of the Decade there was insufficient change in the communication media with regard to the portrayal of women and in their participation in the media.

"Perhaps the most important change has been in women themselves: in their growing understanding of the interest and influences working to maintain dominant media presentations and patterns, and in their increasing search for alternative media strategies and channels which have some hope – however small – of under-cutting the status quo ... Five years ago the analyses of these problems tended to stress the importance of structural change – in both the communication media themselves and in society as a whole – as a prerequisite to real change for women. Now although the importance of structure is still clear, it seems that the strength of ideology itself was perhaps under-estimated". (UNESCO, 1985: 86)

However, changing ideology without direct involvement of women in the making of a new ideology appears no longer to be feasible. This contention, which was widely shared by women the world over, has been providing
the stimuli for women's alternative media movements.

E. Forward-looking strategies

During the 1985 Nairobi World Conference on Women, and in light of the review summarized above, Member States decided to continue further work to improve the status of women in the media. As was the case for the Plan and Programme of Action for the Decade, the Forward-looking Strategies did not place emphasis on the formulation and implementation of communication strategies to enhance the participation of women in mainstream development activities at local, national and international levels. Accordingly, paragraphs 206, 207 and 208 of the Forward-looking Strategies were adopted and contained the following recommendations (United Nations, 1985):

"In view of the critical role of this sector in eliminating stereotyped images of women and providing women with easier access to information, the participation of women at all levels of communications policy and decision-making and in programme design, implementation and monitoring should be given high priority. The media's portrayal of stereotyped images of women and also that of the advertising industry can have a profoundly adverse effect on attitudes towards and among women. Women should be made an integral part of the decision-making concerning the choice and development of alternative forms of communication and should have an equal say in the determination of the content of all public efforts. The cultural media, involving ritual, drama, dialogue, oral literature and music, should be integrated in all development efforts to enhance communication." (para. 206)

"The enrolment of women in publicly operated mass communication networks and in education and training should be increased. The employment of women within the sector should be promoted and directed towards professional, advisory and decision-making positions." (para. 207)

"Organizations aimed at promoting the role of women in development as contributors and beneficiaries should be assisted in their efforts to establish effective communications and information network." (para. 208)

While in this last paragraph the Forward-looking Strategies implicitly stressed the importance of development support communication to facilitate women's integration, the emphasis on women's representation in the media and on changes required to institute a positive image of women in society remained. This lesser emphasis placed on development support communication was matched by the importance attached to communication in other international instruments governing development efforts in such sectors as human settlements, agriculture, industry, and trade. It appears, therefore, that in the years to come, the focus of the international community with respect to women and communication will primarily be on four key areas.

(a) Training for women as media professionals:

(b) Women's recruitment and promotion to high-level posts in the media:

(c) Development of collaborative media programmes with women's professional associations and non-governmental organizations:

(d) Research into women's images in the media.

Given its current orientation, development support communication specifically aiming to enhance the role of women in development is unlikely to emerge out of the women's movement. It will offer however, guidelines to communication specialists who may wish to mobilize women with the cognizance of their critical contribution to development.

F. Institutionalization and networking

In section C above we have already mentioned that a major area of progress in the improvement of the status of women has been the development of governmental and non-governmental institutions dealing with women. The activities of these organizations in generating valuable information for potential use in women-friendly policies, programmes and projects have been summarized. Other than gathering information on women's issues, these institutions also played critical communication roles in raising the awareness of
women's issues, in providing policy inputs, in assisting in policy execution, and in spreading local and national experiences globally.

Communication--specific activities of governmental and non--governmental organizations for women can be summarized as follows. First, they have undertaken or initiated action to eliminate negative images of women conveyed through the media and to institute more realistic portrayals. Secondly, they have made deliberate efforts to have the mainstream media deal with women's issues and to institute programmes aimed at educating women. Thirdly, they have established "alternative media". Fourthly, they themselves have exemplified the effectiveness of communication as an instrument for policy formulation and implementation. Fifthly, they have provided a functional infrastructure for central and local governments to reach women. As already mentioned, governmental institutions for women were formed in the majority of the countries by the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. These institutions, often with extremely limited resources, served as liaison between the non--governmental organizations for women and the governmental apparatus and took independent action to introduce women's issues into the national political agenda. They also carried out studies to determine the extent of sex stereotyping in mass media and in educational and training materials. It was through their efforts, complemented and/or initiated by those of non--governmental organizations, that monitoring of the governmentally controlled media and reduced discrimination against women in school books were introduced.

On the whole, this institution building has helped policies to be more responsive to women's although less so in such main--stream development sectors as human settlements than in others. Particularly worthy of note from the perspective of creating an awareness of women's issues was the spread of non--governmental organizations for women. These organizations took many forms, ranging from traditionally--oriented neighbourhood groups to large--scale umbrella organizations and professional association. Although a large bulk of these all--women groups, co--operatives, and associations remain unreported, they made important contributions to the advancement of the status of women. At the community level, these groups primarily used interpersonal communication methods, but their flexibility allowed them to experiment with other methods as needed and as new resources became available. This flexibility also allowed them to bring remedies to the breakdown of traditional communication and to institute new ways of disseminating ideas and practices. (Hilsum, 1985)

Among non--governmental organizations, women in the media were pioneering in many countries to bring changes in the status of women in the media and to alter the stereotypical images conveyed through the mainstream media.

"In the United Kingdom, Women in Media organized themselves in 1970. They worked in four sub--groups: Broadcasting, Trade Union, Advertising and Education, and a special Anti--Discrimination Action Group lobbies in the House of Commons." (UNESCO, 1980: 76)

Similar organizations were established elsewhere and these have' often networked with one another across countries, partly as a strategy to increase the impact of national media. During recent years, women's organizations specifically dealing with the role of women in settlements management have been initiated. At the same time, a number of existing organizations have focused on women's shelter issues. Among these some, success SINA and MATRIX, operate at the international level primarily through communication activities, while many others, such as the associations of women lawyers and of university women, work at both the national and international levels. Also, organizations such as the Netherlands Women's Council and VAC of the Netherlands communicate their national experiences to women's organizations in other parts of the world for relevant lessons to be drawn.

At the same time, international and bilateral organizations, including UNCHS (Habitat), the Branch for the Advancement of Women, (INSTRAW), USAID and SIDA have been involved in research and training aimed specifically at the improvement of the status of women in settlements. These programmes all share a focus on communication to attain the maximum impact of programme, project and training activities. Non--governmental organizations for women and the networking that they have built with one another within and across national boundaries provides a unique opportunity to use communication at the service of women for gender--aware policy development and implementation. Without this network, it would have been extremely difficult to establish bridges between policy--makers and women. It is, therefore, essential that development specialists and governments make every effort to mobilize these institutions and ascertain their inputs to policy formulation and execution. Through them, women's needs can be effectively identified, responses to proposed policies assessed, and co--operation of women in the implementation of policies, programmes and projects secured.
G. Images of women in the media

Despite long years of struggle, the more recent part of which is summarized above, stereotyping and misrepresentation of the role of women in society are widespread and dominate the media throughout the world. (Gallagher, 1985, 1982, 1981) The stereotyped images created and/or reinforced by various forms of media sustain unequal relations between women and men, and bias the distribution of development benefits away from women. More importantly, they retard the achievement of development targets by diverting efforts to improve human resources away from women who undertake a large portion of the work in many sectors, including in settlements development and management.

"There has been unanimous agreement that the images of women projected by the media constituted a main obstacle to eliminating discrimination against women throughout they world and a main factor in preserving traditional sexist attitudes towards them." (UNESCO. 1980: 52)

Telenovels, radio novels, and photonovels, which are popular in many parts of the world, are dominated by dependent, helpless, and seductive female figures. Advertisements, likewise, present women predominantly as sex objects. In other cases, women are presented as second class citizens, and as a silent majority confined to the home. Newspapers rarely cover women's issues adequately; indeed, popular newspapers communicate the least desirable images of women. (UNESCO, 1985)

The education media is not free from stereotyped images either; history books are written for male heroes, and in other texts women rarely figure. In a sense, the commercial and the educational media respond to society's image of women and reinforce it. In another sense, the media shape social perceptions and attitudes.

"The media reflect and reinforce unequal power structures: between rich and poor, developing and developed countries, men and women. The concerns of the least powerful groups in society and their attempts to organize, are largely absent from the media or are marginalized and distorted." (Carr, 1986: 5)

The prevalence of stereotyping in the educational media particularly hinder the participation of women in non–traditional sectors such as human settlements. Long–lasting changes in such participation cannot be attained without the support of educational programmes; however, reinforcement of stereotyped images of women in such programmes clearly blocks desirable changes. When such programmes are planned, the anti–discrimination action that the women's movement has initiated against the educational media and the knowledge they have gained through their struggle will clearly contribute to policy design. Therefore, it is important for planners of educational programmes relating to settlements to consult women's organizations in the preparation of educational media.

Ironically, a great deal of the development media also neglects to present a realistic picture of women. Women as mothers and housewives always take priority over women as workers and professionals.

"In terms of content, it is not simply what the media say, or how they say it, which bolsters stereotypical. limited and distorted perceptions of women. Equally Important is what they do not say." (UNESCO. 1985: 62)

For instance, when Issues relating to unemployment or to relative wages are discussed in the media, the experience of women is either ignored or undermined. Global or national economic issues are analysed in a gender–blind manner. Studies conducted in many parts of the world indicate the universally of the exclusion of women from 'important world news'. The media covering global or national issues of politics, economics, settlements, or of environment rarely reflect the perspectives of women and, thus, perpetuate policy blindness of the roles women play in society. (Epstein, 1978)

Ample examples can be provided of this situation. Carr (1986) observes, for instance, that although more than half of the world's agricultural producers are women, in many countries the development media still refer to farmers as "he"; or radio programmes aiming at improving productivity among these producers, begin with "greetings to farmer brothers'. Likewise, despite the popular rhetoric that the "female bird builds the nest", the media coverage of settlements issues rarely makes mention of the contribution of women to it.

However, as the realization of the actual and potential contribution of women to development is enhanced. communication styles will also follow suit. This is already observed in some sectors. For instance, the awareness that in many parts of Africa women produce over 80 per cent of the subsistence crops led the
media to give greater coverage to women in agriculture. At the same time, and partly as a result, programme inputs such as extension services, training, and credits were reorganized. To date, special press and broadcasting programmes dealing with the contribution of women to rural development have been instituted in many countries. Parallel developments in the human settlements sector may take longer, but will be forthcoming.

The picture is not uniform over regions; nor has it been constant over time. Many studies indicate that while various types of media convey an inferior image of women, modern and more realistic portraits are also presented. (Keita, 1981; Anani, 1981; Kundya, 1981; Joshi, 1984; Flora, 1983; Asante, 1981) Some country case studies indicate an increasingly positive change over time, while others provide evidence of a trend towards more negative portrayals of women. (UNESCO, 1985) The fact remains, however, that women the world over have taken an active interest in the actual and potential role of the media and have devoted a great deal of time and energy to analysing alternative ways of using media to ensure the equitable participation of women in society. The relevant ideas and experiences women painfully developed over the years not only present a resource for policy-makers seeking to increase the participation of women in society, but can also be used to ensure popular participation in development.

H. Advertisement

Another area in which the experiences of women and women's organizations can be useful to development specialists has to do with advertisement. This experience is based upon analyses of how advertisement impacts on the image of women in society and suggests ways of eliminating discriminatory images conveyed through various types of advertisement. It applies to various sectors, including human settlements.

Women's analyses are based upon the observation that advertising not only institutes changes in consumer behaviour but also provides behaviour models. It assigns roles to women which either encourage or discourage their participation in certain types of activities. Consequently, it affects the participation of women in non-traditional sector activities such as construction where stereotyping, reinforced by advertisement, is a major cause of discrimination. For instance, advertisements may make women appear as "unsuitable" for employment in construction even where and when the demand and opportunities exist for their gainful participation. Such reinforcement can occur indirectly without dealing with the specific sectors in question.

Women's groups have been particularly sensitive to the stereotypical images conveyed by television and radio advertisements. (Courtney, 1983; Greegeen. 1983: England and Gardner, 1983; Janssen 1981)

"Such advertising presents a far greater obstacle to day to progress, to the removal of traditional barriers that prevent women from achieving equality and fully participation in leadership and decision-making, than media entertainment and educational programmes ... Distorted, dishonest images of women presented by media are addressed predominantly to women who, by passively accepting them, weaken their self-confidence and eliminate as useless any desire for change." (UNESCO, 1980: 61)

Specific analyses of advertisement media reveal that even in those regions where a visible improvement in social perceptions concerning women has occurred, such perceptions are not reflected in advertisement. Instead, women continued to be portrayed as sex symbols and consumers of household and beauty products. At the same time, an overwhelming proportion of advertisements are directed specifically at women to change their behaviour.

Women's organizations have expressed particular concern with the way women are treated by transnational companies. They have maintained that these companies attempt to institute uniform images of people and particularly of women, across cultures. They have shown that the subject of women and the media could not be analysed as an isolated and compartmentalized topic, nor could "proposals for changing it be formulated without reference to the totality of the social factors involved, namely the entire social system in which the (women/media) relationship acquired its own particular features and its own dynamic". (UNESCO, 1985: 68)

It is in this context that women's organizations focused on the role of women in the marketing of transnational products, drawing particular attention to the negative impacts of such advertisement on women themselves and on social perceptions of women.

Two characteristics of advertisement have been of particular concern to women: the constant redefinition of the consumer and "universalization". In other words, advertisement either introduces different consumer
images of given categories of women as appropriate for the sales effort, or represents women of different characteristics uniformly. Thus, mothers, wives and executive women may all be represented as sex symbol or as consumers of identical values and of products. This situation causes many undesirable results. On the one hand, it conveys the message to the public that no matter how educated, experienced, and trained women may be they are basically sex objects and can be convinced to adopt identical behaviours. It also institutes identical aspirations among women and hinders self-sustained modes of development.

An example can be given from the settlements sector concerning the negative impacts of advertisement which imposes the same set of values to people who are dramatically different in their real life circumstances. But advertisement treats them uniformly and induces social aspirations which cannot be met. In the shelter sector, such aspirations result in the adoption of unrealistically high housing standards across all income–groups. Often, imported and extremely costly construction materials are demanded and indigenous materials are looked down upon. This tendency for “universalization” is particularly damaging in the shelter sector at a time when the only realistic way of meeting the enormous backlog demand for housing is through the promotion of local resources and talents rather than through the import of construction materials and technologies.

I. Women’s participation in the media

Although there is an acute shortage of data pertaining to women’s employment within the media, women are at a disadvantage both in terms of their overall numbers and distribution across occupations. Women often account for a small proportion of the total employed within the media and occupy low–level jobs as clerks, typists and programme assistants. Even in countries which extend training opportunities equally to women and men, women do not gain access to higher level jobs. (UNESCO, 1985)

The progress in the situation of women in mainstream media has only been slight over the past decades. Indeed, according to studies undertaken by UNESCO (1985) and by the United Nations(1985), even in European countries the proportion of women working in the media did not increase significantly between 1970 and 1983. Neither did their sectoral distribution change: in television, for instance, there has been no increase in the proportion of women represented at the professional and managerial levels. Women have been at a disadvantage at the time of their recruitment and have made slower progress than men once they entered the system. Therefore, the potential of women to influence media policy or to promote change has remained negligible.

"The question arises as to whether an increase of women as gatekeepers would result in more, and different coverage of women’s issues. The answer, for the moment, must be 'not necessarily'. A myriad of factors – institutional, structural, social, professional – conspire to ensure that most media women, like most media men, will operate within an identical ideological paradigm.” (UNESCO. 1985: 64)

This is because they are often viewed as doing their jobs as "professionals" rather than as "women". But, the women’s movement now argues that it is possible and desirable to be a professional and a woman without acquiring male characteristics. Indeed, "recent research has begun to suggest that, in certain circumstances, women do actually conceive of, organize and execute their work differently from men." (UNESCO. 1985: 64)

Despite their under-representation in mainstream media, women have been observed to cover certain areas better than men. Greater numbers of women have started to depart from the traditional pattern and cover new topics which have hitherto been closed to women. (Baehr, 1981) Also, women in the media have been redefining the topics traditionally covered by women to draw more attention to these areas. (Barkley. 1981; Daswani, 1984; Carty, 1984) At the same time, in many parts of the world women and women's organizations have started to develop alternative responses to fulfill their aspirations and to change more effectively the ideology that negatively affects their participation in society.

Although slight, the enhanced participation of women in the mainstream media and the more active and deliberate role they have assumed in promoting the status of women through the media provide a useful background against which a women–friendly development support communication strategy can be developed. A greater awareness can be created among the women and their male colleagues in the mainstream media of the contribution of women to settlements management. Through such awareness–creation, a more extensive coverage of settlements problems specific to women may be secured.
J. Alternative communication approaches developed by women

Despite regional and political differences, and differences in the degree of development, "the centralization of authority in the communications field by commercial or bureaucratic interests has meant, for women, the expansion of a system of communication based on dominance by class gender ... If goals of equality are to be achieved, the democratization of structures and control of the communication media will be necessary as prerequisites. Various women's organizations and community groups have taken important initiatives in this direction by creating alternative media institutions to serve the communication needs left unserved by the mainstream media. These news institutions have helped identify sources of inequality and contributed to the preparation of a strategy for action to change the existing political, social and economic structures with the aim of building intellectual and economic self-reliance and mutual support". (United Nations, 1982: 7)

Women and women's groups have observed that communication can have many purposes, including manipulation, promotion of dialogue, and exchange of experience and ideas. (Aggrawal, 1984) Departing from the premise that dominant mass media is basically manipulative, women sought alternative communication strategies. This was defined as follows: Communication is alternative not when it is marginal or makeshift, but when its contents, and the methods it uses to communicate promote participation and dialogue. " (Jelincic, 1986: 9) Consequently, they experimented with many different types of communication to organize, to raise awareness of issues, and to accelerate action. (Gokhale, 1984)

The communication strategies that have been utilized ranged from personal contacts to the creation of alternative media. Because of their emphases on participation, even when an audio-visual is created without the specific input of women users. alternative media promoters insisted on its use for purposes of discussion generation.

To institute changes in the media in favour of women and to eliminate stereotyped images appeared to be an extremely difficult task in many societies. Through their own media, women more effectively challenged the stereotyped biases widespread among many types of media, including the mass media, educational media, performance media, and development media. Women were able to create their own images and to describe themselves as they saw themselves. Through the experience of ordinary women, working women, migrant women, and of third world women, the value of the contribution of women was better understood both by women and by men. The alternatives women and women's groups developed over the past years to deal with their exclusion from the mainstream of the media took three different directions. The first is the "alternative" media. The second is the formation and extension of news and information networks, and the third is the growth of women's publishing houses.

With regard to the expansion of the written and audio-visual "alternative media' oriented to women's questions. "the trend has been uneven. The past five years, for example, have witnessed the demise of some of the longest established feminist publications such as Effe from Italy and Courage from the Federal Republic of Germany. In Kenya, the excellent and often outspoken Viva, under new editorship since August 1983, has become a totally different product ... But at the same time, other publications survived which were controlled entirely by women ... India's excellent Manushi is now more than six years old ... Sri Lanka's Voice of Women ... has also survived." (UNESCO, 1985: 73)

Attempts were made in many different countries, some with success some without. At the same time, an increasing trend for a global orientation has also started.

Women developed the news and information networks as another response to their exclusion from mainstream media.

"These include nationally based weekly news services such as Her Say in the United States, or Agence Femme Information in France, whose primary aim is to uncover and circulate ... news relating to women which is normally overlooked ... There is (also) a growing number of regional and ... international networks whose purpose is to disseminate information and news and to encourage direct links between women in different parts of the world." (UNESCO, 1985: 74)

Wiser Links, the Unidad de Comunicación Alternativa de la Mujer, the Federation of African Media Women's Features Services. Association des Professionnelles Africaines de la Communication. the Caribbean Women's Features Syndicate, the Asian Women's Research and Action Network and the Depthnews Asian Women's Features Services and the Pacific Women's Resource Bureau are among these kinds of news and information networks.
A third type of response has been the establishment of women's publishing houses in many countries. Because publishing has always been an extremely male-dominated industry, women have realized that without establishing their own publishing houses and presses, they could not ensure a wide-spread dissemination of their ideas. Indeed, Spender (1983) suggests that women's presses are developing at a time when – even in industrialized countries – print is being replaced as the primary form of communication, when general literacy levels are falling, and when new communication technologies are beginning to provide the real new centres of power. France, for example, has already launched its first computer-based women's magazine Elletel. (UNESCO, 1985)

The critical role of visual information and communication in creating an awareness of the disadvantageous living conditions of women and in changing these actively have been better understood by women's organizations over the past decade. (McCracken, 1984; McAnany and Schnitman, 1981; McCormack, 1981 and 1983) At the same time, the cost-effective role of this type of communication in networking and organization has been better appreciated. In this regard, women have been relatively more influential in the academic world and effective in instituting new concepts and approaches to gender-sensitive analyses of a broad variety of topics. (Roberts, 1981: Spender, 1981b)

Having oriented themselves to the visual media, women have noted that establishment films, particularly those emanating from Hollywood since the 1960s, deal most with men and men's problems and create male stars who dominate the box office. Therefore, "alternative cinema women have sought to change the stereotypical images of women. (UNESCO.1980)

"But even here there are dividing lines: films made by men about men, and women's films about women. In the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada, there are several women's film groups producing scores of short films about the situation of women in the present world. These are shown ... mostly to women's audiences or to sympathizers with the women's liberation movement. It would be unfair to dismiss their role in the attempt to change the media images of women. but an exaggeration to see them as a major factor for change. Here. the films produced for mass audience by companies with proper distribution and exhibition facilities, and at considerable cost. are of decisive importance, and they influence the ideas and attitudes of millions of spectators. And, so far, these popular films, seen by impressive numbers of cinema-goers, do little or nothing to foster a worthy image of contemporary women on the screen." (UNESCO. 1980: 55)

The primary objective of the recent world wide expansion of the use of audio-visual media by women and women's groups has been developmental (see annex 1). At the same time, the emphases on the institution of realistic images of women, on presentation of women's problems to the general public, and organizing women are maintained. The motivation for these types of efforts was summarized by Carr as follows:

"Development or improvement in the quality of life is not something that will 'trickle down' from the top to the more disadvantaged groups in society, nor will it come about without their active involvement. Only when groups of people organize themselves can they attain deep or long-lasting achievements. (This is) why women are using audio-visual in their potential to increase women's self-organization and participation in their communities and in the development process." (1986: 6)

Women recognize that audio-visuals cannot automatically ensure participation. Most audiovisuals are made without the input of the people who passively consume them. In many instances, the audiovisuals made by women's groups are not an exception to this. However, women's groups aiming at utilizing the audio-visuals they create for the purpose of organizing and jointly deciding on the priorities for action, use their media for interactive purposes. With their audio-visual tool they create an environment within which they can jointly discuss their problems and their strategies to solve them. As the equipment becomes less expensive and easier to handle technically, audiovisuals such as videos and slides become increasingly more popular among women's groups.

While at present women's efforts are directed at producing audiovisuals for self-education, awareness creation, organizing and communicating among themselves, there is no doubt that they will soon use this instrument to reach policy-makers. In this way, they can communicate their demands for action more effectively through the experience they gain by experimenting with audio-visual media. (Kuhn, 1982) It is important to note, however, that at present the advantage of learning from the experiences of women is particularly pronounced with respect to networking and organization at the community level; of lesser relevance are the experiences of women in communicating with the outside world.
The experience of the Amauta Association of Cusco, as summarized by ISIS International (1986: 31), illustrates how women's audiovisuals can help promote the participation of women in low-income urban communities in Peru. The women of Cusco lived in communities deprived of basic amenities and worked far longer hours than men. Although they undertook the heavier part of the work of the neighbourhoods such as carrying mud and stones, their work was not recognized. When women tried to communicate their problems in assemblies, they were told to send their husbands as it was easier for men to discuss problems among themselves. The women, mostly illiterate, had hardly any time to get together among themselves and had no place to leave their children if they had the time. Nevertheless, they decided to get together to discuss their problems and to get organized. The Association provided illustrated materials from other parts of the world to the women of Cusco. Thus, these women understood that they shared a great deal with women in other communities and countries. They then started taking photographs of their situation. They placed these photographs on cardboard and wrote simple words under each describing the problem. They shared these with women of other neighbourhoods and jointly discussed alternative solutions. Gradually, they developed audiovisuals. This process not only helped them organize and formulate solutions to their problems, but facilitated their dialogue with the rest of the communities.

The alternative audio-visual media has received some criticism that it is unprofessional, lowcost and low-quality. If evaluated strictly by its commercial sales value, it probably is. But, if it is evaluated against its own objectives of enabling women to voice their opinion, informing and educating one another, and of empowering women to participate in decisions that affect their lives, alternative media proved to be an effective tool. Indeed, currently audio-visuals created by women's groups at the grassroots level are used extensively in many parts of the world and provide excellent examples for communication planners charged with the task of designing support communication for development activities.

The distribution outlets of the audio-visuals women create do not match those of the commercial media. But, the many intrinsic ways through which women networked with one another at all levels facilitated the information about the availability of these media and promoted their use. Yet, a great deal more needs to be done in order to spread knowledge about the modest but realistic portrayals of women created by women in many parts of the world. Women's information/communications centres are increasing in number and among them there are those which aim specifically at providing information about women's alternative audio-visual media. A comprehensive list of distributors, film-makers, and women's grassroots organizations dealing with audio-visual media development is provided in a guidebook prepared by ISIS International (1980).

K. Impact of media on women

Women and women's organizations have also analysed the impacts of various types of media on the promotion of the status of women and on the integration of women in development on an equal basis. On the whole, systematic impact assessment of media targeted to the integration of women in development is not available. The task is made particularly difficult since communication targets to be set for women in development depend on many factors, including the extent of stereotyping that characterizes various media, their availability to women, their potential to carry women's voices to the outside world and to bring relevant messages to them under specific local and cultural circumstances.

Studies on the relative effectiveness of different types of media with respect to human settlements policies, programmes and projects are also lacking. In addition, no specific observations have been made concerning the impacts of traditional, audio-visual, written and other media on women's participation in settlements management. Nevertheless, there is much to be learned from the existing information that emerges from other sectors such as agriculture and population. (FAO, 1987 a, b, c, d, e; and FAO, 1988)

The roles different media play in each cultural setting and in different types of development activity vary significantly. In many cultures, women gain information primarily during daily contacts. For instance, in urban Morocco a major source of information is to stand in shopping lines. (Sweeney, 1977) In other cultures, women contact one another primarily during their visits to water bores, wells or to common pipes. Thus, to a large extent the existing channels of communication women use, which are often determined by their daily chores and productive activities, define the nature and intensity of their contact with the outside world. These channels also affect the degree of their receptivity to various types of media. Other factors, such as literacy and education, income, and settlements conditions that characterize different categories of women affect their access to media. They also affect the accuracy with which women receive messages transmitted through alternative channels.
The impacts of alternative media choices on the integration of women in development is also determined by the development context for which support communication is designed. For instance, media appropriate to increasing the participation of women in specific small-scale community participation efforts differ from those which are appropriate to improve women's legal status. Needless to say, the choices involved are not mutually exclusive: often, the same sort of tools could be used in different ways to ensure the participation of women in different contexts.

Media appropriate for improving the status of women in society at large or for improving their overall legal and economic situation are often complementary to more specific or local-level efforts. Indeed, macro-level efforts often facilitate, directly or indirectly, women's participation at the micro-level. This is why the women's movement has been particularly concerned with images of women conveyed through the mass media. Unless mainstream media more accurately reflect women's true contribution to society, project-specific efforts will be difficult to achieve and the potential for generalizing from micro experiences to the macro level will be blocked.

Video films, regular films, slides, photographs, pamphlets, brochures, newsletters and a whole variety of other media can be used to enhance women's participation in settlements management, both at the community level and at higher levels. In choosing between media alternatives it is generally safe to assume that if a given type of media is effective in providing communication between planners and male members of a community, it can be effective for women as well. Indeed, many devices such as maps and aerial photographs can be used to establish communication between technical team members of a community development effort as well as for communication between them and the people, including women. (Lohman and Martens, 1986)

Often, the reason that a given medium is less effective in reaching women than men has to do with its relative accessibility to women in terms of time and location, or with false assumptions about its relative usefulness for women. However, experience shows that despite their exclusion from mainstream media, women have been able to innovate a broad variety of tools, such as simulation games, to produce alternative media to deal with and improve their situations. Therefore, it is important to have an open mind about what might and what might not be an effective communication medium for women and to test the relative effectiveness of appropriate devices before an arbitrary choice for outdated tools is made.

Although media choice depends on a large number of factors, the experience of women indicates that, as a general rule, the simplest selections prove to be the best. Once the planners understand the gender-dynamics of the community and the patterns of information flow among women, and between women and the different segments of the community, a selection is possible. When, for example, the pattern favours direct personal communication, selecting mass media for policy, programme or project implementation support is unnecessary and undesirable. Likewise, if the pattern is highly sex-segregated, sole reliance on male communication workers is ineffective. Indeed, development experience in the field of population and agriculture has pointed to the importance of personal communication and has called for the need to recruit female extension workers in order to reach female farmers.

On the whole, "mass media" within industrialized countries are elite media and especially so in relation to the poor urban and rural settlements. Nevertheless, there has been a remarkable spread of mass media over the past decades. Even in the poorest countries, radio is generally available, newspapers are read in many of the urban settlements, and television is rapidly infiltrating into community-based facilities and households. Today, it is no longer unusual to find satellite receivers in metropolitan areas of a number of developing countries. These developments bring about a constant redefinition of the elite and of the mass media and indicate their increasing universalization. While the spread of mass media may be explained by commercial interests or viewed as a product of governments' needs for mass support, it is difficult to undermine its influence on the people, nor is it possible to underestimate its potential for development support.

Despite the spread of the mass media, poor access by women to it is more limited. This is more so for newspapers and television than for radio even when community-based TV monitors are available and newspapers can be purchased. At the same time, given their lower levels of literacy and education, women's consumption of a large variety of print media is also low across cultures.

Of the mass media, the radio has been used more frequently than others to provide support for development. (Habib, 1985) Radio is part of everyday life and its speakers are often good. It penetrates remote areas relatively inexpensively and once purchased can be listened to regularly without requiring, as do newspapers, daily distribution and expense. It is a medium that is known to have become friends with women. It has also been less strong than visual media in creating or reinforcing sexist and negative images of women.
The potential of radio to educate and mobilize women and men for development has been appreciated by policy-makers in many countries, although purposeful programming to serve women and men equally has not yet been instituted systematically. For instance, in Bangladesh, radio programmes that have supported efforts to organize women's groups and to send teams to promote and obtain feedback for a population programme have proved extremely successful for women. (FAO, 1988) In the context of an agricultural education programme, having established that men do not listen to the radio in the evening, the communication campaign involved taking radios to the agricultural fields where men worked. (Shaw, 1983) In many other instances, women and women's organizations have created special broadcasting programmes and voiced their demand for greater coverage of women's concerns by the media. (ISIS, 1986)

For both women and men, regional and local programmes have greater impact. When women hear familiar voices from nearby communities, they can relate more easily to the messages. In countries where decentralization of radio broadcasting is taking place and where local programmes devote time to population, nutrition, agriculture and other development issues, changes supported by radio programmes have been more easily achieved.

"Television is probably the most powerful medium of communication in the world today. Its influence in shaping attitudes and concepts is unquestionable. The image of women presented on television screens may have a positive or negative impact in the fight against sexism and discrimination. At present, this impact is predominantly negative." (UNESCO, 1980: 55)

Studies indicate that in many countries women make little appearance as compared to men in prime-time programmes, and that they are projected in limited roles as secondary to men. These roles are often confined to "the dumb blonde", "nice girl", or the middle-class working woman in an unsuccessful search for a new identity. (UNESCO, 1980) However, changes, although slow, are taking place and television is not only starting to convey more realistic roles for women, but is also transmitting development information that might help increase women's participation in society.

Country experiences show that in community-based programmes and projects, mass media are less useful than "group media". This has been the case even when regional broadcasting was available. "Group media" refers to all media that facilitate communication within a group and between that group and other groups or individuals. Music, theatre, slides, videofilms, flip-charts, and sound tapes are among the more frequently used group media. (Balcomb, 1983) These media are often designed by community development specialists; people's inputs to their design are usually introduced at the stage of pre-testing.

Because women and women's groups have had useful experience in developing group media, communication specialists will benefit from women's expertise in the design of group media for specific programmes and projects. For instance, women have found it effective to work with slides, videos and similar low-cost audio-visual tools, especially in areas where the literacy rate is high and the mass media, including the radio, is under government monopoly. (Spender, 1981a; Spender, 1981b; Waites and others, 1982; Wartella and others, 1983) Preliminary research on media effectiveness for women's participation in settlements management provides support for the use of audio-visual group media produced at the local or community level. (ISIS, 1986)

In working with audio-visual group media, women have observed that the introduction of a new medium often necessitates utilization of a more accepted communication tool at earlier stages of a programme. For instance, in some countries, development communication programmes for peasant women based on the video were facilitated by the initial use of photography. (FAO, 1988)

Along with audio-visuals, radio, and different types of print media, women have experimented with puppet shows, street theatre, comics and dance, and have found each useful depending upon the context and purpose. (Mosho and Wasko, 1984; Roberts, 1981; Root, 1984; Weerasinghe, 1983) They have also observed that traditional forms of communication could be used effectively to bring women into the core of the development process. Perdita Huston, in her book Third World Women Speak Out, reports an illustration in which local women communicated population information to large numbers of targeted women. "Zahia Marzouk of Alexandria has written songs about family responsibility and family planning that were at first sung only at wedding festivities. They have become popular, however, and are now also sung elsewhere; the music and the words carry the message ... Another example of learning through music was a song ... by the women of a co-operative farm in northwestern Kenya. The village had been the scene of a cholera epidemic the year before; nearly one third of the village had died ... Its subject was the story of the y cholera epidemic. of the deaths that had ensued, and of how to keep the 'witch cholera' out of the house and village in the future. These village women had created a musical learning tool that could be passed on to others via the radio. "

30
Integration of women in human settlements development and management through communication support

There are many ways and means of integrating women's concerns and capabilities in human settlements development and management. These range from government decrees to long−term educational programmes. However, the purpose of this paper is not to compare the relative advantages of alternative approaches to the integration of women in development, but to explore the factors that would justify and facilitate a communication approach.

A communication approach is basically supportive of other types of measures: in most types of settlements development and management activities, it is not the only means of achieving policy, programme and project objectives. Indeed, it may be unnecessary unless basic legal and organizational structures are in place. If laws do not allow women to acquire of property, campaigns on existing opportunities do not concern women. If regulations prevent the access of women to commercial loans, relevant advertisement of financial institutions need not be directed to women.

A communication approach is a means of reaching development objectives more efficiently and cost effectively. It is also a means for strengthening the impact of legislative, financial, and other measures designed to increase people's participation in development. When such measures are unavailable, it is a means of creating an awareness of the need for such measures: when they exist, it is a tool for informing women of their availability. More importantly, development support communication is the only mechanism to promote democratic and participatory development: it is the only mechanism to seek people's contributions in the formulation of policies and programmes and to solicit their cooperation in their execution.

We have already mentioned that alternative measures to ensure people's participation in development necessitate communication support. This contention can be illustrated through examination of two key types of measures: legal and financial.

Legislation

Since the establishment of the United Nations, legislation to eliminate discrimination against women has been an important area of progress. Starting with the Charter of the United Nations, many international instruments have aimed at improving the status of women. These improvements, while not dealing systematically with the status of women within the settlements sector, dealt, nevertheless, with settlements issues through their focus on such matters as women's employment, access to credit and property ownership. Through a large number of international instruments, working conditions were regulated to reduce discrimination against women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women aimed at providing equal right to land ownership for women in rural areas.

National legislation followed international decisions in some countries; in others it preceded international action and provided motivation for it. In yet others, despite international decisions, legal structures for the institution of equitable access to resources and opportunities national legislation was not altered. Women and women's organizations have networked and communicated within and across national boundaries to ensure equal legal status. Once legislation was in place, far greater efforts had to be made to inform women of their rights.

For legislation to be effective:

(a) It must be known by women who are to benefit from it;

(b) It has to be understood and accepted by both women and men;

(c) Mechanisms must exist for as enforcement. These mechanisms include institutional and organizational provisions, the willingness of law enforcement personnel, and the ability of women to demand remedy if deprived of opportunities provided by such legislation.
If information concerning legislation providing women equal opportunities and offering protective conditions is unknown or viewed as unsuitable, it cannot be effective. For instance, property laws, once highly discriminatory against women, have been modified in many countries. While women were traditionally excluded from ownership of land according to customary laws, modern practices increasingly make room for the access of women to land. Yet many women do not know of their entitlement. Those who do may not all be convinced of the need for their use of such entitlement owing to a fear of denial and/or threat by their menfolk. Or those who do, but are not allowed to exercise their entitlement, may be scared to take corrective action.

The discrepancy between the de facto and the de jure status of women has been emphasized by large numbers of women. This discrepancy is due primarily to lack of communication support for legislation. The resistance of society or of certain segments of it is merely another expression of the communication failure of policy-makers to affect public opinion adequately to allow the practice of laws. It was with this recognition that the Regional Meeting of Women Lawyers on Women and Shelter, held at Nairobi in September 1987, especially stressed the importance of taking action to inform women of their legal entitlement. Women lawyers from around the world have pointed out that it is no longer the lack of appropriate legislation but the lack of appropriate communication that sustained the low status of women in the shelter sector.

Finance

The obstacles that hinder the access of women to farm credits, housing loans, commercial loans, and other types of credit opportunities have constituted a major theme for action among women's organizations throughout the United Nations Decade for Women. Discriminatory legislation or practice of financial institutions, the low level of income and savings held by the majority of women, their low level of education, their lack of time and in ability to deal with formal institutions, and traditions that restrict their interaction outside the narrow family circle, are among the many factors cited as explanations for women's relative inability to obtain loans. Intensive communication of the role women play in the production of subsistence goods in the agricultural sector has resulted in greater availability of farm credits to women. A similar development in the human settlements sector will promote the entrepreneurial capacity of women as well as increasing production in the construction sector. But, financial opportunities do not automatically become available to poor women; they can, however, be more easily sought through enhanced communication.

There are a number of communication–specific activities to enhance women's access to credit.

(a) Compilation of gender–specific information on financial assistance by women and women's organizations:

(b) Organization and articulation of anti–discriminatory action to obtain equitable entitlement for women;

(c) Organization of various types of campaigns to seek public support for anti–discriminatory practices;

(d) Advertisement of existing opportunities to relevant groups of women;

(e) Preparation and dissemination of information on eligibility and application procedures;

(f) Modification of eligibility criteria and application procedures through inputs of target groups;

(g) Establishment of functional channels of communication to elicit difficulties women encounter in accessing financial assistance.

Just as the success of legal modifications and new finance programmes depend on effective communication at all levels, slum and squatter–area upgrading programmes, land–reclamation programmes, resettlement schemes, urban renewal projects, sanitation efforts, and transport programmes all rely heavily on public co–operation. indeed, past experience shows that inclusion of a systematic communication support component enhances the success of the settlements management process. (UNCHS (Habitat). 1983) This success also depends on the ability of planners to ensure the full participation of women at all stages of policy and programme development. If legal and organizational barriers have been eliminated, a well–designed communication strategy will facilitate the integration of women's concerns into settlements management.

Once a central role is assigned to communication in the settlements sector, allocation of human and financial resources commensurate with its vital role will have to be made. It is incorrect to think that communication will take place automatically once its role is acknowledged. A great deal of expertise and sufficient amounts of
funding are necessary for it to provide effective support to policies, programmes and projects. The institution of a women–friendly communication component for a programme will also require additional human and material resources. The involvement of communication experts in settlements planning bodies to institute appropriate mechanisms for soliciting the needs and preferences of communities, to inform them of options and decisions, and to obtain feedback from the people all cost money and human energy. Savings in human and financial resources are possible in communication support activities targeting women owing to the communication channels/networks women have established in many parts of the world and to the skills they have developed in interpersonal, inter–organizational and 'alternative' communication.

Fundamental in the formulation of a communication strategy capable of enhancing the participation of women in settlements management is the recognition of the "informal city, and the "informal sector" in which a large portion of women's labour is invested and within which the self–help capacity for settlements development can best be promoted for both women and men. This recognition implies the need to decentralize communication support activities and tap the communication networks and tools that predominate in the informal city. among these are those skill–fully developed by women.

Whether directed primarily to the "informal city, or settlements in their totality, policy support communication activities would involve the following to be women–friendly:

(a) Information from women and women's organizations as an input to policy and programme formulation; information on women's needs, characteristics, current activities relevant to the issues under consideration; adequate assessment of the actual and potential contribution of women relevant to the settlements issues to be dealt with; communication information to facilitate identification of media and other aspects of communication activity to be directed to women in the process of policy and programme development;

(b) Dissemination of information on pipeline policies and programmes to women and women's organizations; full utilization of networks that women have established for such a purpose by using messages, methods and media appropriate for targeted groups of women;

(c) Mobilization of existing resources and provision of new ones to enhance the organizational capabilities of women; provision of incentives. motivation, and training to strengthen the organizational base of targeted groups of women;

(d) Institution of innovative communication and co–operation between all parties involved in the settlements management process, including local and national organizations of women and organizations dealing with settlements; elimination of legal and organizational barriers against such co–operation; organization of campaigns to encourage such co–operation at all levels with special consideration of difficulties encountered by women in establishing communication with community leaders, planners and policy makers;

(e) Institution of feedback mechanisms to allow women's views to be reflected in monitoring activities; full utilization of governmental and non–governmental, local and national, formal and informal women's organizations to elicit information on policy and programme impacts; development of procedures to facilitate policy/programme re–structuring in response to such information.

It will be equally important to:

(a) Inform all government agencies, donors, financial institutions, non–governmental organizations and interest groups actually or potentially concerned with the policies and programmes to be adopted; ensure, in particular, the reception of relevant information by women's organizations active in matters of possible relevance to settlements management; (b) Inform, motivate, and train the staff of the settlements sector to ensure effective implementation of the new policies and programmes; do so specifically with regard to measures adopted to enhance women's participation in them; and if existing policies and programmes contain women–specific components which are partially applied or largely ignored, organize staff training and re–orientation programmes;

(c) Inform the general public and engage in relations management to seek support of policies and programmes enhancing women's participation in settlements management and to reduce/eliminate discrimination against the effective participation of women in sector activities;

(d) Build self–confidence and skills among local women in relation to settlements management activities of relevance to the policies and programmes in question;
(e) Train community development and field workers to ease their communication with women and women's organization; assess the potential use of communication networks and methods women have developed and establish the relative effectiveness of media for target groups of women in order to facilitate interaction between development workers and women;

(f) Encourage human settlements training and educational institutions to include in their curricula courses on communication support planning; provide motivation for re-structuring of existing programmes and the establishment of new ones dealing with the role of women in settlements development and management.

The process involved is not an easy one; nor is it so difficult and cumbersome that it should justify further delays in action. Once legal barriers are removed, organizational deficiencies may be remedied in an incremental fashion without having to re-structure the settlements sector entirely. Policy-programme- or project-specific action can be initiated with the intent to adopt a women-friendly communication support approach to settlements management. Through such a process of institution building, significant progress can be made in a relatively short period of time.

It is important to note that relevant action has already been initiated at national and local levels. Therefore, a completely fresh start is not necessary; rather there is much to learn from communication support activities initiated in sectors other than settlements and from various aspects of the women's movement. It is also worth emphasizing once more that women have a great deal of relevant experience and an existing organizational base to facilitate the promotion of a communication approach to settlements management. If the resources women offer for the adoption of a communication support strategy are appreciated and adequately assessed, significant savings in time and energy can be made.

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Annex I: List of women's audio-visuals related to settlements problems

1. Women in Development (Philippines)

Made by Kahayag Foundation for Development Support Communications, in English

A slideshow about women in Cebu squatter area. Women who resist a demolition activity organize themselves through a local women's organization.

2. Mulheres Numa Creche (Brazil)
3. Tenemos Nuestras Manos (Chile) Made by Cecilia Montedo and Juan Carlos Sandoval, in Spanish
Video describing the daily life of poor urban women from a neighbourhood of Santiago.

4. Buscando Caminos (Colombia) Made by Cine Mujer–Colombia, in Spanish
Video describing the work and activities of women's groups in poor communities of Bogota.

5. En el Agua y en el Barro (Ecuador)
Made by Corporación Ecuatoriana para el Desarrollo de la Comunicación and Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos, in Spanish
Slideshow describing the dramatic living conditions of the poor in suburbs of Guayaquil.

6. Mujeres del Centro de Acción de Mujeres (Ecuador) Made by Centro de Acción de Mujeres, in Spanish
Slideshow describing the situation of poor women living in the city of Quito and the activities of the organization making the film.

7. Comedor Popular Posa Alarco (Peru)
Made by Taller de Capacitacion e Investigacion Familiar, in Spanish. Slideshow describing the experience of a group of poor women in a low-income urban neighbourhood.

8. Vida de Angel (Mexico)
Made by Angeles Necoechea, in Spanish. Distributed by the Centro de la Mujer para la Produccion Audiovisual (Mexico)
In co-operation with the community groups, the film describes the poor working and living conditions of urban women in two neighbourhoods of Mexico City.

9. Mujeres Yataltecas (Mexico)
Made by Sonia Fritz, in Spanish. Distributed by Comunicacion. Intercambio y Desarrollo Humano en America Latina
Slideshow describing the lives and various forms of organization of women in a small town.

10. Las Amas de Casa (Mexico)
Made by Colectivo Cine Mujer and Colectivo Hilvan, in Spanish. Distributed by Centro de Mujeres para la Produccion Audiovisual
Video describing how women form tenants' organizations in a poor neighbourhood of Mexico City and the resistance of women against eviction. The manner in which these evictions are carried out and their impact on women are detailed.

11. Mujeres en Lucha (Mexico) Made by Colectivo Cine Mujer and Colectivo Hilvan, in Spanish
Video describing the formation of squatter settlements in the outskirts of Mexico City. The crowding and filling of the encampments, their attempts to divide up an occupied site for homeless families and the struggle of women against government officials trying to lure the newcomers away are shown.

12. Las Mujeres lo Hicimos (Peru)
Made by Marisa Godinez and Pilar Cantella, in Spanish. Distributed by Centro de la Mujer Peruana Flora Tristan
13. Nosotros, las Maderes de los Barrios Populares del Cusco (Peru) Made with the support of Asociacion Amuata, in Spanish

Slideshow describing the experience of a number of women's groups in audiovisual production to affect the conditions of their lives in poor urban communities.

14. Mujeres del Planeta (Peru) Distributed by Chasqui (Peru). In Spanish

Documentary film describing the story of rural migrant women living in the newly settled towns in the periphery of Lima. Women try to help one another to fight against insanitary water, sewerage, hunger, etc.

15. Mulher–Identidade–Urbanismo (Brazil) Made by Asociacao de Mulheres de Mato Grosso. in Portuguese

Video describing the enormous problems of indigenous migrant women victims of urban environment.

16. Building Your Future (England)

Made by Women in Manual Trade Group. in English, Distributed by Concord Films Council Ltd. (England).

Film showing the physical and psychological problems of women who decide to be skilled workers in the building trades. A plumber, carpenter, and a bricklayer describe the road to success in these non–traditional jobs.

17. Les Métiers non traditionnels (Canada) Made by Femmes en Focus. in French.

Video describing the difficulties women encounter in non–traditional careers.

18. Too Dirty for a Woman (Canada)

Made by Signe Johansson, Kathleen Shannon. in English. Distributed by the National Film Board of Canada

Film describing how women took advantage of the formation of a new town to acquire nontraditional sector employment.

19. Moving Mountains (Canada)

Made by Laura Sky, in English. Distributed by Steelworkers National Office (Canada)

Film describing the capabilities of women in undertaking large–scale infrastructure work.


Film describing various aspects of women's work in non–traditional trades.

21. Breaking Through (Canada)

Made by Kern Murch Women's Workshop. in English. Distributed by Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre.

Film showing how skills and technology training for women can help them master their jobs.

22. Why Women Stay (USA)

Made by Jacqueline McSweney and Debra Zimmerman, in English. Distributed by Women Make Movies (USA).

Film demonstrating the supportive environment in battered women's shelter and discusses the implication of shortage of funds for such shelter.
23. The Apartment (USA) Made by Rita Moreira and Marma Mahia Pontes.

Video describing the questions of rental search and rental accommodation in New York City.

As part of the 1985 World Conference on Women a film festival was organized by Harbour−front, in co−operation with the National Film Board of Canada. Among these, the following were particularly relevant in communicating the settlements problems confronted by women and the solutions they experimented with in different cultural settings.


Film describing the activities of women in a small community in the outskirts of Sao Paolo


Film exploring the problems of water supply in Kenya as affecting women and the solutions that avail themselves through the activities of women's organizations

26. La Vendedora Ambulante, Peru Directed by Cecilia Salazar, in Spanish.

Describes how women are often disillusioned in their efforts to run away from rural poverty and to opt for the bright lights of urban areas. In their search for a better life women may end up living on the streets as pedlars.

27. Mujeres Somos Y En La Colonia Andamos, Mexico Directed by Rosa De La Caudillo, in Spanish.

Film describing the plight of women and their families is in a village where the sole industry is brick−making. The women struggle for water, electricity and basic necessities completely without assistance.

28. Little by little

Made by United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in collaboration with the National Film Board of Canada, in English.

Film reviews the participation of an urban squatter community, located in Quezon City, Manila in an UNCHS−assisted project. To a large extent women and women−headed households are carrying out the main tasks of reblocking their plots, organizing the construction of new houses and improving the structure of existing ones.

29. Participation not Paternalism

Made by United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), in English.

Film examining community participation in Colombo. Sri Lanka. Residents of an urban squatter settlement organized by their own community development council, take up the task of building a community well under contract with public works department. They cope efficiently with the organization or work. Women play a major role in organizing and supervising the community labour inputs.

30. A Woman's Place

Made by United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), In English.

Film analysing the active role women play in low−income urban communities of Sri Lanka with regard to organizing their living space, housing construction and basic services. To some extent, these roles have increased as a result of male emigration to Gulf countries.