

# **The Evolution of Public Relations: Case Studies From Countries in Transition Second Edition**

**Judy VanSlyke Turk  
Linda H. Scanlan  
Editors**

**Published by the Institute for Public Relations Research and Education**

**Made possible by generous grants from  
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University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)  
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Case Studies From Countries in Transition  
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**Judy VanSlyke Turk**  
**Linda H. Scanlan**  
Editor

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## **Introduction**

Public relations is one of the world's fastest growing professions and areas of study, yet great differences exist globally in its practice and teaching. There is general agreement, however, that case studies of communications campaigns are one of the most effective teaching and learning techniques for both students and practitioners.

The first edition of this casebook was compiled in 1998 for use in a workshop on how to teach public relations directed by the editors for university professors in the Baltic States and Russia. A year later, and with some additional cases, The Institute for Public Relations published the book.

Much has happened in public relations in the ensuing five years. Both the academic discipline and professional practice have burgeoned in the countries of Eastern Europe and the former USSR. African nations have been both the originators and the focus of intense public relations efforts. Asian countries are showing high levels of sophistication in their use of public relations. And new universities in the Middle East are preparing their students for careers in public relations.

Yet, significant cultural, social, political and economic differences between countries remain and these differences shape the way public relations is practiced from country to country. In the Introduction to the first edition we said, "Public relations in one country is not necessarily public relations in another." That is still true today.

Most of the published texts and readily available case studies in the field continue to rely heavily upon Western experience, largely from the United States. Professors, students and, we suspect, practitioners need examples and models with which they and their countries can identify. We also have found that Western practitioners need examples to help with the global nuances that often mean the difference between success and failure. For those reasons, we decided this casebook needed to be updated.

The nine new cases include suggested teaching notes and discussion questions that we believe will be helpful. Developed by the individual authors, these notes also provide insight into how teaching of public relations varies worldwide.

We are indebted to our authors, the educators and practitioners who have contributed cases to this collection. They and the Institute for Public Relations have made this second edition possible.

Judy VanSlyke Turk, PhD, APR, Fellow PRSA

Linda H. Scanlan, APR

## **Tell Me a Story Too**

**Ieva Burneikaite**

**Senior Consultant for Communication and PR**

**Acta Publica**

**Vilnius, Lithuania**

**email: [ieva@actapublica.lt](mailto:ieva@actapublica.lt)**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
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University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400

Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

The communication campaign “Tell me a story too...” was developed to improve the image of deaf people in Lithuania, to raise awareness of Lithuanian Sign Language and its necessity, and to promote its usage in the families of deaf children.

The campaign used two strategic blocks of communication. First, it executed intensive media relations to disseminate factual and reliable information nationally. Second, it used communication with an emotional appeal, positioning deaf people as successful and happy members of society and presenting the silent request of deaf children for parents to communicate with them too using sign language.

Successfully chosen messages and third party endorsement allowed the campaign to gain maximum media coverage and to reach its target audience.

## **Problem Statement**

The communication campaign developed and implemented by the Center for Lithuanian Sign Language and Saatchi&Saatchi was the first attempt in Lithuania to increase awareness about Lithuanian Sign Language and the necessity of its usage. This case is an example of how tools and techniques of public relations can be used in the realm of national development and how effective communication can raise the issues of a specific group to the level of national discussion. For those who study public relations the case will show how to reach specific audiences and how to change negative attitudes in an environment where no specialized media channels are available.

## **Background**

Lithuania is one of the former Soviet Union countries, located in Northeastern Europe. It has common borders with Latvia, Belarus, Poland and Russia. With a population of 3.4 million people, Lithuania is the largest and most populated of the Baltic States. (“Country Profile Lithuania,” BBC News UK edition, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/Europe/country\\_profiles/1106095.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/Europe/country_profiles/1106095.stm))

More than 80 percent of the Lithuanian population is ethnically Lithuanian and speaks the Lithuanian language, a language of the Baltic language group which is also the official state language. Several sizable minorities exist, such as Russians, Poles and Belarusians, and they may speak their native language at least some of the time. (“Country Profile,” Advantage Lithuania, <http://www.lida.lt>)

Lithuania regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1990. In the years following independence the country has been building a new state order based on the principles of democracy. To bring about economic growth and become an efficient state, Lithuania had to make numerous reforms and changes. Financial, social care, health care, education, privatization and other reforms have begun since the fall of the Soviet Union. Many of those are still in progress.

Today Lithuania has one of the fastest growing economies in Central and Eastern Europe and has already been invited to become a member of the European Union. The country's industrial base includes electronics, chemicals, machine tooling, metal processing, construction materials, food processing and light industry, including the manufacture of textiles, clothing, furniture and household appliances. ("Country Profile, Advantage Lithuania, <http://www.lida.lt>)

Strategic communication and public relations as they are understood in Western societies began to emerge in Lithuania after the fall of the Soviet Union. Along with the growth of the economy and private sector, public relations became a part of corporate culture and the marketing mix. While the spread of public relations has not been ubiquitous throughout the country, nonetheless departments of public relations operate today in bigger organizations and governmental institutions, numerous PR agencies provide multipurpose services of PR and it is expected that the practice of public relations will expand and improve.

Because polls in Lithuania show that the mass media are an institution the population most relies on, media relations have been the most important PR tool to reach major audiences. However, an increasing flow of information in recent years forces PR practitioners to look for other techniques to reach their audiences.

Lithuania's media market consists of four national television networks, 10 radio networks and 44 regional television and radio networks. Public broadcaster Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) operates two national TV channels and two national radio networks. There are seven national daily newspapers and an even larger number of regional and local newspapers. Specialized media are primarily dedicated to women's interests, health care and family issues.

The problem with which this case deals is the implementation of civil rights of the handicapped in Lithuania, particularly with the right of the deaf to use, to have access to learn and to receive education in their native language. The main task of the campaign was to reach and to change the attitudes of a relatively small part of the population: families of deaf children and those who work with them. Since there were no specialized media available, in order to reach the target audience the campaign design had to include either direct contact with members of the population or to make the problems of the deaf people an issue of national importance. The campaign included both.

Lithuanian Sign Language (LSL) was recognized as the native language of the deaf in Lithuania in 1996. However, years after it gained this official status, the deaf community and those who work in this field have claimed that the right of the deaf to receive education and information in LSL has not been fully implemented. Indeed, LSL had never been officially considered as the most important means for communication of the deaf in Lithuania. Just after 1996 LSL started to be used in schools, public TV stations started to translate several programs and interpretation services started to be offered at social care and community centers. However, the system of LSL training is still developing: current teachers in the schools for deaf children have only rare chances to improve their LSL knowledge since an LSL study program was started just in 2002. Also, the network of interpretation services is not sufficiently equipped: because training in LSL had not been available, interpreters usually came from the families of deaf people, and there is not a sufficient number. Parents of the deaf children did not have the opportunity to learn LSL so they could communicate with their own children.

Regardless of the positive changes in the system of social care and improving conditions of civil rights for the deaf, the infrastructure ensuring the right of the deaf to their native language in education was not sufficient enough.



In the fall of 2002, the Center for Lithuanian Sign Language (CLSL) took action to improve LSL usage and training. With the support of the European Community, CLSL established LSL training courses for the hearing parents of deaf children. The purpose of this project was to implement the right of deaf children to grow, learn and communicate with their own parents as well as to prompt the parents to learn and use LSL and thus to improve the performance of deaf children in school, social life and careers.

According to the data provided by the CLSL, 90 percent of deaf children live in hearing families. As parents did not have the opportunity to learn LSL, these children had limited possibilities to learn and to communicate with their closest family members in their own language. Deaf children could not start articulating language as the means of transmitting symbolic meaning and thinking until kindergarten or even until elementary school.

Usually children learn language and develop linguistic thinking at the age of six or seven, imitating their parents or others close to them. Scientists have proved that language is one of the most important building blocks of a child's development. Through language we learn to know the world. Because spoken language cannot be heard by deaf children, and the majority of parents in Lithuania did not know LSL, these children were missing the most important period in their development: they could not learn any language and were missing the opportunity for quality relation with their parents. ("Lietuvos Kurciuju Problemos," Kurcias Vaikas Seimoje, 1999) Despite the official recognition of LSL and the obvious necessity for its use, the initiative to promote LSL usage encountered some scepticism, perhaps because of an earlier predominant paradigm that proclaimed that sign language is not a necessary means of communication for the deaf because they can learn lip reading and use spoken language, thus becoming almost like hearing people.

The task given to Saatchi&Saatchi, the PR agency, was to persuade the target audiences of the necessity of LSL in the environment of deaf children and to urge parents to learn LSL. A long-term goal was to improve the image of the deaf community and LSL in society, thus improving integration of the deaf into society.

Prior to the planning of the campaign, research was done. The main goals of the research were:

- To detect the key audiences.

- To learn about the level of awareness and necessity of LSL, and about attitudes and misperceptions of target audiences about the deaf community and LSL.

- To detect communication media with the potential to reach target audiences.

The research included interviews, focus groups and media research. The results showed that the target audiences were:

- The deaf community.

- Hearing parents of the children.

- Teachers of deaf children.

- Hearing society.

- Media (both a the channel for communication and a target audience).

During the interviews and focus groups, attitudes and misperceptions about LSL and the deaf community were detected. The main misperception about LSL was that all target groups considered LSL an insufficient mean of communication, something that cannot be used like spoken language and with linguistic limitations. Also, LSL was seen as an obstacle for the integration of deaf into the society: as an obviously different mean of communication, it set deaf

people apart and formed a closed community. The majority of hearing people said that LSL was aesthetically not attractive. Awareness of LSL necessity was low among all the target groups.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The main goals of the campaign were to change attitudes and to gain awareness among the target audiences that:

- LSL is equal in quality as a means of communication to spoken language, and
- LSL is an inseparable part of a deaf child's development and a necessary condition for further education and integration.

In the long run it had been expected that the campaign communication would improve overall perception of the deaf community and LSL.

The measurable goal set for the communication campaign was to improve attendance at LSL training courses for the parents of the deaf children.

The objectives set for the campaign were:

- To inform target audiences that LSL is the native language of the deaf in Lithuania, and to present it as an aesthetically attractive and equal quality language to the spoken word. Prevailing negative attitudes would be changed and positive images of LSL built, sympathies of the population would be gained and parents would be induced to learn and to teach their children to speak LSL.

- To communicate the importance of LSL for the deaf child and deaf community as an issue of national importance. This was expected to build the motivation of parents to attend LSL classes.

- To present the deaf community as progressive and successful by changing prevailing attitudes that deaf people form a closed community, speak a strange language and hardly integrate into the society. This would improve the overall image of the deaf and LSL.

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

The communication campaign used information which had to be transmitted using different types of communication:

- Information about LSL.

- Information about the necessity of LSL and arguments for its usage.

- Information about the deaf community.

- Information about the "Tell Me a Story Too" program, its organizers and their expertise.

The communication campaign included media relations, cooperation with different institutions, strong third party endorsement and an emotional appeal with the campaign slogan "Tell me a story too..."

The first part of the communication strategy involved media relations. Because the research revealed that national media did not pay enough attention to the issues of the deaf and specialized media of this community did not have enough outreach and were not trusted, the campaign included intensive media relations on the national level. In order to change the attitudes of parents, the plan was to make this particular problem of the deaf an issue of national discussion and thus attract the attention of target audiences. The plan included a number of tactical steps, using primarily press conferences, press releases and interview opportunities.

The first step was to raise the interest of media and their audiences about deafness and the deaf community. A press release about the increasing number of deaf in Lithuania was distributed to the national and regional media outlets. The press release gave the numbers of the deaf over the past 20 years and presented the scope and spread of deafness in the country and around the world. Even though the increase in the deaf population was not very big, the media reacted instantly. This gained additional media attention.

A second press release informed media and their audiences about the rights of deaf people to learn and use their native language and how these rights were being violated in the process of a deaf child's development, education and access to information. This press release had sensational appeal to the media because it used third party endorsement from UNICEF and the Lithuanian Deaf Association. The goal of this release was to increase media attention and to build the demand for a solution for deaf children.

Following the second press release, a press conference was organized. The speakers at this conference presented the problematic situation of LSL and the development of deaf children in more detail. Also, they presented the solution: LSL courses for parents of the deaf children that would start in a couple of months. This press conference gained media attention and media coverage on both national and regional levels. The articles discussed the problems of deaf children and informed parents about upcoming courses where they could learn LSL.

Following this press conference a number of press releases were issued to maintain media attention and coverage. These press releases informed media and their audiences about the development of the LSL training program, statistics about deaf children and violation of their rights, sensational news about research findings about LSL and the upcoming publishing date of an LSL dictionary.

Along with press releases distributed to all media outlets, Saatchi&Saatchi pitched exclusive information to the national newspapers and magazines about real people and success stories in the community of deaf people. The articles portrayed young, handsome and happy teachers of LSL, young men who have chosen the profession of LSL researcher, a deaf artist and the success story of a deaf businessman. This "soft" information was planned to improve the image of the deaf community and to build sympathies among the target audiences.

The second part of the communication plan built on the notion of emotional appeal and its effectiveness to gain audience attention. The overall communication campaign carried the slogan "Tell me a story too..." which implied silent supplication of a little deaf child to his parent to tell him a story. Along these lines it implied that these children want to be treated as hearing ones, but they are not. On this level the campaign included cooperation with the Children's Theatre, where several performances had been translated into LSL. These events were positioned in the media as a gift for a deaf child and gained media attention and were widely described in the media.

The last step of this campaign was the performance of deaf teenagers on the professional theater stage. To gain maximum attention, Saatchi&Saatchi proposed to make the play a collaboration between professional actors and deaf children. In cooperation with the Vilnius Doll Theatre in the capital of Lithuania, an independent director, playwright and group of deaf teenagers developed the play, which told the story of the city and a lonely man living in it. The story communicated the fear of isolation and neglect. Deaf teenagers were actors in this play and LSL was presented here as the dance and the means of communication. To adapt the play for broader audiences than the deaf community, it used a voice-over storyteller. However, all the

visuals emphasized the beauty and flexibility of LSL. The uniqueness of this event attracted desirable attention from media and the ideas of the play were carried on the major media outlets.

The budget allocated to this campaign was 4,500 Euro. However, many events attracted funding from other sources. Also, cooperation with strategic partners such as Vilnius Doll Theatre did not require expenditures.

### **Results Achieved**

The campaign “Tell me a story too...” was started in the fall of 2002 and lasted until the end of the year. However, the results of it are still visible: media keep the issues of the deaf and the discussion alive.

Media relations resulted in maximum attention from media representatives and assured maximum media coverage on the issues of the deaf children and the problems of their development in their families and school. LSL was widely covered in the print press, on TV and on radio talk shows.

In addition to planned new stories in the mass media, media relations gave rise to long lasting public discussion on the usage of the sign language. This topic was presented in discussion and argument shows on both national TV and radio. Also, TV channels presented a couple of feature films presenting the life of deaf people. This could also be considered as a response to the issues of deafness raised to the level of national discussion during the campaign.

Following the campaign, the LSL courses for the parents of deaf children, organized by CLSL, were well attended.

### **Conclusion**

The communication campaign developed and implemented by the Center for Lithuanian Sign Language and Saatchi&Saatchi was the first attempt in Lithuania to increase awareness about Lithuanian Sign Language and the necessity of its usage. This case is an example of how tools and techniques of public relations can be used in the realm of national development and how effective communication can bring the issues of a specific interest group to the level of national discussion.

The keys to the success of this communication plan were detected during research, which detected major misperceptions about Lithuanian Sign Language and associations related to deaf people. Therefore, the messages specifically addressed particular attitudes, offering strong arguments and third party endorsements. These messages were supported with “soft” communication, attractively presenting and visualizing LSL and deaf people so that the audiences could form their own impressions about deafness and sign language. The emotional appeal of the campaign made the information more believable.

## **TEACHING NOTE**

### **Overview**

The case of the Lithuanian Sign Language communication campaign offers students the opportunity to explore specific aspects of public relations in a developing post-socialistic country, where mass media outlets are trusted by society. Also, it shows how to make communication effective by detecting audience attitudes and misperceptions, making messages newsworthy, and using third party endorsements and emotional appeal.

### Questions for Discussion

The case can be discussed from many different angles. Possible successful approaches could include the following:

1. *Focus on the use of public relations techniques to raise and advance development issues.* This approach will allow broadening the range of PR applications. Also, it can lead to a discussion of communication tactics changing prevailing attitudes and traditions.
2. *Focus on research.* This perspective will allow analysis of the importance of audience research in public relations. How did the research findings affect the main messages of the campaign and how did they shape media outlets chosen? Why did this campaign not use the approach of audience segmentation? This can lead to discussion of the benefits of audience segmentation and why in some instances communication with a “general” public makes communication more effective.
3. *Focus on why the campaign succeeded.* This discussion on the keys to a successful communication plan can bring additional suggestions and creative ideas as to how this particular campaign could have produced better results.
4. *Focus on why national media outlets picked up the topic.* Discuss the issues of media relations and ways to make messages newsworthy.
5. *Focus on the use of third party advocates.* Why were these particular communication partners chosen? How did third party endorsement support pro-active communication and pre-empt attacks?
6. *Focus on the specific character of PR in post-Soviet countries.* How did the Soviet suppression of freedom of speech affect today’s landscape of mass media in these countries? Why do people of these countries choose to trust in mass media over other institutions of the state? This will show how differently people use media in different countries.

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**Public Communication Campaign  
for the World Bank Air Pollution Abatement Program  
in Slovenia (1996-1997)**

**Dejan Vercic  
Pristop Communication Group  
Slovenia**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
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University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

Air pollution caused by the use of dirty fossil fuels (coal, wood, heavy oil) for power generation and heating is one of the biggest environmental problems in countries in transition. In Slovenia, a newly independent country in Central Europe with a population of 2 million living on 20.296 square kilometers, the heating of buildings, flats and individual houses utilizes about one third of the total energy consumption and is therefore responsible for the same proportion of air pollution with sulfur dioxide and smoke.

The Government of Slovenia established the Environmental Development Fund (Eco-Fund) within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to manage loans for gas conversion. The World Bank had established a credit for an Air Pollution Abatement Project in Slovenia from which the Eco-Fund provided attractive low interest loans to households to convert their dirty heating systems to more environmentally friendly systems. From June 1995 to May 1996, 117 loans were made to individual households.

In 1996, the European Union through its Phare program issued a public tender seeking proposals for a “Pilot Testing Phase of the World Bank Air Pollution Abatement Program” that would evaluate and improve the Eco-Fund project management capabilities, design and launch an extensive public communication campaign, and design and provide computer courses and purchase computer and communication hardware and software for Eco-Fund staff. A Slovenian consortium of four public relations consultancies won the tender.

This case study described how Pristop Communication Group, which was responsible for the design and implementation of the public communication campaign, increased ten-fold the use of loans by individual households. The public communication campaign started in May 1996 and by its end, 1,896 Slovenian households converted from dirty fossil fuels heating systems to more environmentally friendly heating systems.

The purpose of this case study is to show how good use of research and straightforward execution can be effective even within externally imposed time and financial constraints and in economically hard times.

## **The Problem**

Slovenia has a population of nearly 2 million people, living on 20.296 square kilometers and generating a GDP of US \$21 billion. It is located in the middle of Europe between Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Italy. From its capital, Ljubljana, it takes two and one-half hours by car to get to Venice (Italy), or five to Vienna (Austria). It gained its independence from Yugoslavia on June 25, 1991. Since then it has changed its currency (from Yugoslav Dinar to Slovenian Tolar),

political system (from a one party “people’s democracy” to a multiparty parliamentary democracy), economic system (from “socialist self-government” to market economy) and social system (from a closed to an open society), and accomplished privatization of formerly “social-owned” capital, denationalization of the property that was nationalized under socialism and internationalization of the economy into the broader European and global market.

Air pollution caused by the use of dirty fossil fuels (coal, wood, heavy oil) for power generation and heating is one of the biggest environmental problems in countries in transition, including Slovenia. Most Slovenian urban areas are situated where air inversions frequently occur during heating season.

The heating of buildings, flats and individual houses utilizes about one third of the total energy consumption in Slovenia and therefore is responsible directly or indirectly the same proportion of air pollution emanating from big power stations.

Although efforts have been made in Slovenia to reduce air pollution from burning dirty fuels, the problem still exists. Previous efforts have been directed primarily at reducing air emissions from big power stations because of their concentrations of air emissions on one site.

Starting in 1995, Slovenia successfully launched an air pollution abatement program that was financially supported by the World Bank and the European Commission (through the Phare program).

The purpose of this case study is to show how use of research and straightforward execution can be effective in public communication and changing public behavior even within externally imposed time and financial constraints and in economically hard times.

Time and financial constraints are common in public communication campaigns, particularly if providers of communication services are selected through a public tender (bidding process) which usually pre-defines what has to be done, in what time and with what resources.

The social and economic environment also play an important role in the execution of any public communication campaign. Usual goals of public communication campaigns are public goods--clean air in this case. Although in general nearly everybody agrees that the public goods are needed, the question is who is to pay for them.

The “polluter pays principle” that is often accepted in environmental matters can be complicated if the polluter comes from a low-income strata of society. In this case the major target public was retirees, who are in post-socialist countries in a very vulnerable financial position. However, it was found through research that some (grown-up) children in Slovenia were prepared to pay for the convenience of their elderly retiree parents. The campaign theme as a result broadened from environmental to financial questions and the convenience of newer heating systems.



## **Background**

The Government of Slovenia established the Environmental Development Fund (Eco-Fund) within the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to manage loans for gas conversion. The World Bank had established a credit for an Air Pollution Abatement Project in Slovenia from which the Eco-Fund provided attractive low interest loans to householders to convert their dirty heating systems to more environmentally friendly systems. The Eco-Fund served only as the overall loan managing institution, while the funds themselves were disbursed by a group of banks led by Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor.

In 1996, The European Commission through its Phare program issued a public tender (request for bids) for a “Pilot Testing Phase of the World Bank Air Pollution Abatement Program” that would evaluate and improve the Eco-Fund project management capabilities, design and launch an extensive public communication campaign, design and provide computer courses and purchase computer and communication hardware and software for the Eco-Fund staff. A Slovenian consortium of four public relations consultancies (ITEO, Pristop Communication Group, Sistemi Shift, and E-Net) won the tender.

The consortium collaborated through a project board that held 13 meetings and a project assurance team that held 32 meetings during the time of the project. The total value of the project contract was ECU 400,000 (U.S. \$456,000) of which ECU 154,800 (U.S. \$176,500) were designated for the public communication campaign.

The public communication campaign started in May 1996. One month was designated as an inception phase, 11 months as the implementation phase and 1 month as the finalization phase.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The initial formative research for the design of the public communication campaign was executed in May and June 1996. It used both formal and informal methods. The latter consisted of in-depth interviews with the management and staff of Eco-Fund and interviews with some of their target audiences. The formal research consisted of a poll of a representative, quota sample of 1,163 households representing the population of 645,000 households in Slovenia. Face-to-face interviewing for the poll was executed from 20 to 28 June 1996. Situational analysis of publics, which was used to analyze the willingness of the population to enter into communication on the project's topics, showed that half of the population could be viewed as a willing target.

From the poll it was concluded the average member of the target population had the following characteristics:

- \* s/he is older
- \* lives in urban environment
- \* is employed by state/public company
- \* lives in a family with one provider
- \* has middle or lower family income
- \* is more receptive to communication activity as level of education increases

From in-depth interviews it was found that an important group especially interested in

the conversion of their heating systems were retirees. It was found that the grown children of these retirees were prepared to financially help their elderly parents convert to gas heating for the reason of convenience.

Following the research, three broad goals were defined:

- \* to train and increase the communicative capability of the Eco-Fund management and staff
- \* to increase awareness about the loan program in the target population
- \* to influence the target population and other enabling groups to do the necessary preparatory work, apply for loans, take the loans and convert their heating systems. Five major audiences were identified for the public communication program:
- \* the target group within the general population that should be persuaded to apply for loans to convert old and environmentally unfriendly heating systems
- \* enabling publics (those institutions directly involved in the loan program that have an influence on the success of the program such as banks, labor contractors and natural gas and district heating distributors)
- \* media (journalists and editors of both print and electronic media on local and national levels)
- \* energy consultants and professional associations (professional energy associations, municipal energy consultants)
- \* a political public (Parliament, Government, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, environmental pressure groups)

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

The tactical plan consisted of using eight types of communication tools:

- \* launch event: “open day”
- \* training and seminars for Eco-Fund management and staff
- \* advertising
- \* live radio talk shows
- \* media relations
- \* brochure
- \* toll-free telephone line
- \* national roundtable on environment

**Launch:** “Open Day.” The public communication campaign was launched with an “open day” reception at the premises of the Eco-Fund in May 1996. Representatives of local communities, managers of leading energy supply companies, bank executives and journalists met with the management of the Eco-Fund and their staff for a briefing on the project and its goals.

**Training and seminars.** After research and the initial planning phase of the project, the communication campaign started with the preparation of the Eco-Fund management and its staff for their role as communicators about the loan program. This consisted of training them for the preparation of public delivery of a short statement (30 seconds), and open statement (no time

limitation), an interview with a journalist and training for participation on a TV round table (September 1996). As a result of that part of the training, a Question & Answer manual on those topics was prepared. The training was followed with seminars on the following topics: “basics of communication management and public relations,” “from interpersonal to organizational communication,” and “public affairs” (October 1996). As result of and as supplements to those seminars several documents for internal use were prepared under the following titles: “definition of the communication problems in air pollution abatement program,” “situational analysis of the Eco-Fund’s publics,” “definition of communication goals,” “Eco-Funds target audiences,” “definition of communication goals for each public,” “communication areas,” “communication model for strategy implementation,” “plan of activities,” “public relations program schematic presentation” and “media relations plan.”

**Advertising.** A creative team that consisted of the campaign art director and a copy writer, designer, TV spot director and expert for media planning completed and submitted a comprehensive plan for the media campaign. The creative work was finished in July 1996 and the materials were presented to EcoFund executives with a presentation map. The presentation map for the Eco-Fund management included: suggestions for the main slogan, copy text, layout of a print advertisement, scenario for a TV spot and radio advertisement. The creative work was approved by the Eco-Fund management. TV advertisements in the length of 16 seconds were run on both major national TV stations, one public (TV Slovenija) and one private (POP TV) in September 1996 (the first wave) and in March 1997 (second wave). Its first airing reached 70 percent of the Slovenian population 443 GRP (gross rating points) and 6+ OTS (opportunity to see). Its text was short and simple. After naming the sponsor of the advertisement (*The Environmental Development Fund of the Republic of Slovenia*) it started in black and white, showing a young girl running towards a rocking-chair as green colored more and more of the picture: *Don't you think that you spend too much money polluting the environment? / Change your source of Energy! / Take advantage of favorable loans for cheap and environmentally friendly heating.*

Radio spots were placed on nine national and regional radio stations in March 1997: Radio Brezice, Radio Celje, Radio Dur, Radio Glas Ljubljane, Radio Maribor MM1, Radio Ognjisce, Radio Trbovlje, Radio Triglav and Val 202. Print advertisements were published in September 1996 and in March 1997 in 10 national regional and local dailies, weeklies and bi-weeklies: *Delo*, *Dnevnik*, *Dolenjski list*, *Gorenjski glas*, *Ljubljana*, *Novi tednik*, *Ptujski tednik*, *Slovenske novice*, *Vecer* and *Zasavc*. Print ads were one quarter of a page and like the broadcast ads identified the Eco-Fund and banks that were facilitating the loans. The text was: *Don't you think you're spending too much money on polluting the environment? / The blackness surrounding us is becoming greater each day because many Slovene homeowners are still heating their dwellings with environmentally hazardous solid fuels. / But coal- or wood-fired furnaces can soon become your black past. / Use favorable loans for environmentally friendly and comfortable heating! / The Environmental Development Fund of the Republic of Slovenia offers favorable loans to everyone living in areas with more polluted air and who would like to change to using cleaner fuels. In order to limit environmental pollution and at the same time provide comfortable heating, we recommend the introduction of a heating system for remote heating, gas, heating oil, heat pump or solar energy. Favorable loans are available for installing the aforementioned types of heating systems. / Choose pure comfort. / Loans for environmentally*

*friendly heating are available from the following banks: Nova kreditna banka Maribor; LB Domzale, Dolenjska banka, Celjska banka, LB Zasavje, LB Koroska banka and Gorenjska banka. / Information may be obtained from: / The Environmental Fund of the Republic of Slovenia/ Telephone: (061) 17633 44/MO7TO: Change the source of energy! / LOHGO: Environmental Development Fund of the Republic of Slovenia d.d.*

**Live radio talk shows.** To spread more information about the loans and how to obtain them and to get the target audience to join discussions on the loan program and on the environmental issues, 21 live radio talk programs were organized (from September 1996 to June 1997) on the following national and regional radio stations: Radio Studio D, Radio Triglav, Radio Ptuj, Radio Brezice, Radio Tribovlje, TV Impulz, Radio Kranj, Radio Glas Ljubljane, Radio Celje, Radio Dur, Koroski radio, Radio Maxi, Radio Sora, Radio Univox, Radio Trbovlje, Radio Cerklje, Koroski radio, Notranski radio, Radio Morje, Radio Koper and Radio Izola.

**Media relations.** A total of 27 articles were published in the national press and 35 in the regional press. A total of 660 minutes of time were aired on electronic media. Special background materials, progress reports, press releases, fact-sheets and feature stories were prepared.

**Brochure.** To provide the target audience with useful information in a friendly “take-home” form, available in appropriate locations, a booklet entitled “Loans for Environmentally Friendly Heating Systems” was prepared, printed and disseminated. In the booklet readers found information about loans (how to get them, who can ask for them, necessary documentation...). In the booklet was a list of useful addresses such as the Energy Advisory Office and banks. Approximately 14,000 copies of the booklet were disseminated. Its contents included: *basic information concerning loans for environmentally friendly heating; technical data on environmentally friendly heating systems such as remote heating, natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, light heating oil, heat pumps, and Solar-powered heating systems; what the loans could be used for; who is eligible for the loans; how to apply for a loan; how to obtain advice on energy consumption; available energy consulting service and information and application documentation.*

**Toll-free telephone line.** Intensive feedback from the public has been recorded in 975 phone calls on the published telephone number. Numerous other calls on other Eco-Fund phone numbers or to the live radio talk shows also were received.

**National roundtable.** A national roundtable on environmental priorities and necessary measures to stimulate air pollution abatement activities in Slovenia was organized on April 22, 1997 International Earth Day. It was addressed by the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, Dr. Pavle Gantar. As its result, a coordinating body was established that included representatives of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry for Economic Affairs, Environmental Development Fund, Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Efficient Energy Use, Chamber of Commerce and energy distributors. The coordinating body is responsible for suggesting, adjusting and supervising the loan program.

## **Results Achieved**

Prior to the campaign reported in this case study, the Environmental Development fund (Eco-Fund) published its first public offer of favorable loans to enable citizens to convert to environmentally friendly heating systems in June 1995. Through May 1996, 117 loans were distributed.

Within 10 months of the implementation of the public communication campaign in May 1996, 1,896 loans were distributed and an equal number of households converted to environmentally friendly heating systems. Thus the campaign resulted in a ten-fold increase in loans.

In December 1996, Pristop Communication Group conducted research to evaluate the progress of the communication campaign and to discover major problems and obstacles that loan-takers had been dealing with in the process of administering the loans. Six in-depth interviews, two focus groups and a telephone poll of 140 loan-takers were conducted.

Research results confirmed prior assumptions about the feasibility of the loan program:

- \* the population of loan-takers was older than the general population of Slovenia, with retirees forming 40 percent of loan-takers

- \* the availability of financial resources in the form of an Eco-loan was named as a reason to take the loan in only 15 cases

- \*major reasons given for applying for the loan and converting heating systems were the convenience of the new systems (57%), environmental reasons (55%), and age of the previous system (30%).

- \* 56% of respondents identified print advertisements as the primary source of information on the loan, 25% friends and relatives and 16% television advertisements

- \*the brochure was identified as an important source of information on the loan by 40% of respondents, while only two of them identified it as the primary source.

For a third of the interviewees, it took more than a month to complete all the required technical and financial documentation for applying for the loan. That “user unfriendly” paper procedure was identified as a major obstacle to deal with in administering future loan programs. That and other findings from the evaluative research were presented to the management and staff of the Environmental Development Fund. (Socio-economic and other personal data could not be obtained from loan applications due to legislation protecting personal information that is provided to an institution for a limited purpose -- in this case to banks for the purpose of obtaining a loan.)

Further knowledge also was gained about household decision making on the question of converting heating systems, about the work of enabling institutions, etc. Another workshop was organized for researchers from the Pristop Communication Group, staff of the Eco-Fund and the management of the loan program at the Nova Kreditna Banka Maribor, the bank that coordinated the work of all other banks involved.

At the end of the project, written recommendations for further efforts on behalf of the loan program--including public communication--were provided to the management and staff of the Eco-Fund.

Although the project that is the focus of this case study was successfully completed in July 1997, the Eco-Fund continued communication activities using its own staff and resources. Due to the success of the first project, the European Commission issued a second tender through its Phare program to support the activities of Eco-Fund in 1998.

## **Conclusion**

This case study is based on two four-page case summaries that were prepared by Darinka Pek-Drapal, the project director of the campaign at Pristop Communication Group. The case study has received two awards: the United Nations Award, given out by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) in cooperation with the UN for a single project in a year that best meets the working guidelines of the United Nations, and an Award of Excellence from the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) - Europe.

The author of this case study, Dejan Vercic, is a Partner in Pristop Communication Group and was member of the project team, acting as its research director. For this case study, original research and both interim and final reports of the project were reviewed along with project documentation that is archived at Pristop Communication Group.

After receiving the UN award, Pristop Communication Group prepared a video case study of the communication campaign. The 5' 55" (VHS) videotape with the case study is available from Pristop Communication Group, Selanova 20, PO Box 3249, 1001 Ljubljana, Slovenia.

**“Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey”:  
Case Study of a Public Relations Campaign**

**Aydemir Okay  
Associate Professor  
Ayla Okay  
Associate Professor  
Public Relations and Publicity Department  
Istanbul University  
Istanbul, Turkey  
email: aydemirokay@hotmail.com**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
and the International Public Relations Association, [www.ipra.org](http://www.ipra.org)

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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

The “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” project began in 1997 in conjunction with Turkcell to increase educational opportunities for girls in Turkey. It addressed these societal conditions: that girls are unable to receive adequate education because of traditions, especially in impoverished rural areas within the priority development regions, and that any economic assistance available is used primarily for boys. The project supported the mission and principles of the Association in Support of Contemporary Living (Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği -ÇYDD) in pursuit of the goal of safeguarding and enhancing the rights vested by Atatürk reforms and principles through contemporary education.

The initial phase of the project, letting girls living in rural areas go to school, began in 1997 with ÇYDD awarding scholarships to 17 female students in Pervari, district of Siirt, where no girl had been sent to school since 1989. When the budget of the association proved insufficient to expand the scope of the project in response to increased interest, a professional public relations firm suggested that the association seek additional financial support. In 2000, Turkcell, one of the country’s three cellular telephone providers, learned that its customers wanted it to support educational projects, according to a survey conducted amid its customers. So Turkcell saw fit to support a charitable project, and launched the “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” campaign in cooperation with ÇYDD. This project, which entered into its third year in 2003, earned for Turkcell the first prize in the social responsibility category of the Excellence Award in 2001, given by the Institute of Public Relations, and The Crystal Obelisk Award from Women Executives in Public Relations in 2002.

With this project, ÇYDD and Turkcell have made considerable contributions to the educational progression of girls and to Turkish society as they unveiled the conditions of girls living in rural areas, reasons they are not sent to school, family priorities and the socio-economic and cultural situation in rural areas.

## **Background**

### *Turkcell History*

The Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) market in Turkey is consistent with the population size and demographics of Turkey, which is among the top five fastest-growing European countries. The growth in the mobile communications industry has stalled in Turkey at around 38 percent market penetration, below the penetration in the US and Japan. (Turkcell Corporate Communication Department interview, Nov. 3, 2003) Turkcell, which is one of three GSM operators active in Turkey where severe competition takes place, is showing considerable efforts to inform its target audiences of its investments in culture, education and technology with a view to differentiating itself from its rivals.

The mobile communications industry began in Turkey with the start up of Turkcell in 1994. Turkcell, which signed a 25-year GSM license agreement with the Turkey Transportation Ministry in 1998, has increased the number of both its subscribers and services based on mobile voice and data communication. (<http://www.turkcell.com.tr>)

Turkcell ordinary shares are listed on the Istanbul Stock Exchange and the American Depository Shares are listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Trading of shares of Turkcell began simultaneously on both exchanges on July 11, 2000. Turkcell is the first Turkish company to be listed on the NYSE. Approximately 14 percent of the company is publicly owned. Institutional owners include Çukurova Group Companies (42.3 percent), Sonera Holding B.V.



(37.1 percent), MV Group (6.3 percent) and other shareholders (0.4 percent). (<http://www.turkcell.com.tr>)

Since the beginning of its operation, Turkcell has invested about USD \$3.7 billion, including license fees, in its network infrastructure. Its coverage encompasses, as of September 2003, approximately 18.2 million subscribers including prepaid customers. Turkcell's coverage area includes 100 percent of the population living in cities of 10,000 or more people and 99.5 percent of the population living in cities of 5,000 or more people. The country's 81 largest cities and the majority of the country's tourist areas and principal intercity highways are included in the coverage area. Turkcell ranks the 7<sup>th</sup> in Europe, and 16<sup>th</sup> in the world in number of subscribers. (Turkcell Corporate Communication Department interview, Nov. 3, 2003) At the beginning of 2003, Turkcell affiliated with the GSM Association that represents 77 percent of the global mobile communications market, including 585 member operators serving about 850 million subscribers in 200 countries. (Turkcell Corporate Communication Department interview, Nov. 3, 2003)

Rendering services to its customers with a staff of more than 2,000, Turkcell is the first Turkish GSM operator to be accredited with the ISO 9001 quality certificate.

Turkcell describes its corporate mission as follows: "As a leader and reliable company, Turkcell is committed to ensuring the happiness of its customers, shareholders and employees through joining forces with its business associates." (Turkcell Corporate Communication Department interview, Nov. 3, 2003)

Turkcell views every individual in need of communication as a part of its target audience, and lists opinion leaders, general public, press, government and educational institutions as its primary target groups. (Turkcell Corporate Communication Department interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

## **The Association in Support of Contemporary Living (ÇYDD)**

ÇYDD is the other party contributing to the "Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey" project. ÇYDD is one of the leading non-governmental organizations active in Turkey in the field of education.

The Association in Support of Contemporary Living (ÇYDD) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) that was established in 1989 to voluntarily work to safeguard and further improve Atatürk's principles and reforms, help establish contemporary individuals and society by means of education, and use knowledge, skills and accumulated experience toward the ideal of "reaching the contemporary civilization level." (<http://www.cdyy.org>)

The ÇYDD's aims are:

- Establishing, protecting and developing a modern secular society and social state of law upholding the universal children's, women's and human rights.
- Improving individuals' legal, political, economic, cultural, social and physical positions, and ensuring that they can benefit from all human rights and freedoms.
- Contributing to the social development of society by formulating concrete projects directed towards the solutions to the national problems in order to raise awareness in society regarding environmental issues and Turkish cultural heritage.

ÇYDD's well-trained volunteers, eager to serve their country, are concentrated especially in the field of education. It has 15,000 members and 95 branch offices nationwide.

ÇYDD awards scholarships to more than 16,000 students in primary school, high school and universities. It also provides educational support for 5,000 girls who have little chance to go to school in rural areas in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, the priority development regions of Turkey. Also, it raises awareness and knowledge in society through holding conferences, panel discussions, contests and a variety of other events.

ÇYDD, carries out all its projects under joint protocols with the National Education Ministry, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Social Services. The fact that education in Turkey is suffering a great many deficiencies leads ÇYDD to direct most of its activities towards that field.

### General Educational Profile of Turkey

With the proclamation of a republic in Turkey on October 23, 1923, great changes were experienced in Turkey. Women were granted equal rights with men in 1926 when the Civil Code was adopted. In 1934, women were granted the right to vote, before many European countries did so. In 1935, 18 women entered the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

The republican regime vested women with some contemporary rights and let them cast votes. But arrangements necessary for their education were insufficient. In most rural areas, girls are subject to the rules of the tribal order, and either their families or economic difficulties prevent them from going to school. (Hizlan)

With 65 percent of its 70 million population under the age of 35, Turkey has the youngest population in Europe. It also has one of the youngest populations in the world, as 40 percent of its population is under the age of 18. According to the 2000 census, the adult literacy rate in the country is 77 percent for women, and 94 percent for men. (UNICEF)

In Turkey compulsory education was extended from 5 to 8 years in 1997. Since that date, the female student population increased by 69 percent: 167 percent in rural areas, and 37 percent in urban centers. (Anadolu Ajansi)

In the 2000-2001 school year, the proportion of eligible students attending school was 10.1 percent in pre-school, 100 percent in primary school, 64 percent in high school (of which 22.2 percent is vocational and 41.8 percent is overall high school) and 28 percent in higher education (of which 17.8 percent is formal education). In 2001-2002, a total of 16.1 million students were enrolled in 58,900 private and state-owned educational institutions. Of the total, 2 percent are in the pre-school level, 80 percent are in primary education and 18 percent in high school. Forty-four percent of the schools are located in urban centers, while the rest are located in rural areas. (<http://www.meb.gov.tr>)

The following table shows the distribution of students by private and state-owned schools in 2001-2002. (<http://www.mwb.gov.tr>)

<b>REGIONS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>MALE STUDENTS</b>	<b>FEMALE STUDENTS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS</b>
Marmara Region	621	374,440	191,916	182,524	18,100
Aegean Region	305	195,820	97,385	96,434	10,752
Mediterranean Region	309	236,194	127,221	106,973	10,913
Central Anatolia Region	527	286,009	151,125	134,884	14,490
Black Sea Region	332	166,381	90,334	70,047	6,521
Eastern Anatolia Region	242	107,935	66,910	39,025	5,209

Southeastern Anatolia Region	161	123,597	84,959	38,838	4,504
TOTAL	2,637	1,490,376	811,851	678,525	72,609

Considering the distribution of female and male students by regions, it is clear that males attend school much more than girls do in all regions. The number of female students is just half of that of male students in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions. In other regions of Turkey, although the number of male students is higher than that of female students, they are closer in number.

The allocation of funds for education in Turkey is lower than in many other European countries. The appropriation in the country's 2002 budget is about 7.4 percent of the total budget for primary and secondary education (approx. TRL 7.5 quadrillion). When colleges are included, the amount spent on education is 9.6 percent of the total budget. The proportion in other countries is higher: 16.4 percent in Germany, 18.1 percent in France, 18.7 percent in Switzerland, 16.2 percent in Japan and 12.4 percent in United States. The average budget appropriation for education in the European Union (EU) is 14 percent. EU countries use 6 percent of their GNP for education, while Turkey uses only 2.2 percent of its GNP. (Hurriyet Insan Kaynaklari) Yet, a well-educated young population is one of the most important elements affecting the future of a country.

The overall literacy rate in Turkey is 85.6 percent, while it is just 68.8 percent in the Southeastern Anatolia Region. The majority of illiterate people in the region are women. According to the 1998 yearbook of the State Statistics Institute, in 1990 the total number of illiterate women in Turkey was 6,808,000. (Sabah)

Educational data for the 2000-2001 school year in the Southeastern Anatolia Region may help us better understand the mission of the ÇYDD project. In the region, 3,500 village schools are closed down, and the shortage of teachers is 14,000. According to GAP data, 20 percent of those illiterate are males, while 47 percent are females. In villages of Urfa, teachers are not even included in the social ranking in which the agha (rich villager) is the first, the "muhtar" (village headman) the second, and the imam (prayer leader) the third among the civic leaders. In the region, civil servants conduct some campaigns for education. For instance, some "kaimakams" (officials governing a provincial district) launch literacy campaigns, trying to persuade families to participate by saying, "Take your money, give it to my student." In Kirbulak, a village with 50 houses and a population of 600 male villagers never let their daughters go to school. (Nokta). There is total ignorance in the village even though there is a school.

#### "Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey"

When Ayşe Yüksel, the Rural Areas Coordinator of ÇYDD, was in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions in 1996 and 1997, she noticed the people's way of living and the difficulties they encountered with respect to education. She started to figure out remedies and plans for projects. (Minibas interview) At that time, girls, especially from the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions between the ages of 12 and 15 who are daughters of families with 5 to 7 children, sent letters to the ÇYDD chairperson Prof. Dr. Türkan Saylan, saying that they were eager to go to school, and called for help. (Finansal Fıorum)

Ayşe Yüksel developed a project to enable girls living in rural areas go to school that had these objectives: (Sabah, Türkiye Çocuk. Cumhuriyet, Vatan)

"Upon the enactment of the eight-year uninterrupted education, we realized that the fact that such education is compulsory could not be clarified sufficiently. Many parents withdrew

their daughters from school after fifth grade. We began to discuss what to do, when the kaimakam of Siirt Pervari at that time told us that only 17 female students had been at the second level of primary education, that they cannot proceed due to inadequate means, and that there had not been one single girl at the high school level in the past eight years. We used the money raised by one of our branch offices in Germany to award these 17 girls TRL 20 million in scholarships.

“Then we attempted further projects to reach more children. In 1998, we picked up 20 girls in 10 cities with inadequate means who were eager to go to school. Our target was to reach 464 girls in the third year of this project. So, we made an immediate call to kaimakam and governors within the region. Our objective was to award scholarships to female students and encourage them to continue their education. From Tunceli alone came 200 demands. We started with 17 students and reached some 464 students in the third year of the project.

“In Turkey boys were given the priority to go to school, which also is the case in other developing countries. Parents fail to let their daughters go to school due to poor living standards. We thought we could make education possible.”

ÇYDD tried, within its limits, to support girls living in rural areas, but the association's finances were insufficient due to the proliferation of projects over time. ÇYDD, through its public relations consultants, publicized and expanded the project and convinced Turkcell to join it in support of the project. Both organizations met goals: Turkcell was seeking, at that time, a project concerning education and ÇYDD found a way to award scholarships to 5,000 girls, not just 464. “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” was deployed as a brand new project.

### *Why Girls?*

In some regions of Turkey, there are many multi-children families with inadequate economic means who usually use their economic power primarily to send their sons to school. They think there is no need for their daughters to go to school, given that they will immediately marry in any case. An even more serious cultural barrier exists to keep girls out of school: some parents do not let their daughters study because they are timid of their neighbors' views. (Asena) For instance, in the Southeastern Anatolia Region, traditional values are still prevalent: the belief that girls should not go to school, the marriage of girls at early ages, the fact that parents take their daughters away from school when their bodies begin to develop, and the view that girls are helpers to mothers in domestic affairs. In the region, the average woman has had 3.5 years of schooling.

Girls living in rural areas face especially serious deprivations and are forced to marry at early ages. In Turkey, 489,000 girls between the ages of 15 to 17 years, and 14,000 girls between 12 and 15 are married. Among them, more than 280,000 have children. For this reason, these girls are unable to live their childhood. (Hurses) On the other hand, as the mother of infants they bear heavy responsibilities at an early age.

This adversely affects their lives, husbands, parents and children. A high death rate of children and mothers, frequent childbearing, husbands marrying more than one woman, and expectations of women that are limited to meeting physiological needs all result from the women's lack of education. (Zaman)

### **Goals and Objectives of the Campaign**

Turkcell learned in 2000 that its subscribers wanted it to support education and started to search for what it could do about education. Since the lack of education is always indicated as the source of many problems, Turkcell contacted some NGOs to seek ways of cooperation

concerning educational problems. It decided to cooperate with ÇYDD, one of these NGOs, to further develop the NGOs pilot project aimed at awarding scholarships to students unable to proceed in school due to their bad economic conditions. The result was the “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” project. (Turkcell Corporate Communications Department interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

***The campaign’s goal was to raise awareness of the importance of educating girls, and to prevent their disposal in marriage at early ages.***

***The objectives of the campaign were:***

- To ensure that girls can benefit from equality of opportunities in education.
- To equip girls to be professional individuals, and open new prospects to them.
- To ensure that girls are able to pursue their educations, and attend high schools and universities by preventing the disposal in marriage and early childbearing of girls.
- To ensure that girls are able to educate themselves as well as the environment they live in.
- To contribute to the elimination of interregional economic imbalance.
- To enable women to contribute their intellect and awareness to produce proper solutions to their country’s problems.
- To make considerable contributions to the education and progression of qualified human resources, which is one of the fundamental problems of Turkey.

### **Strategies Tactics and Techniques**

A press conference was scheduled in Turkcell’s auditorium on August 28, 2000, to launch and publicize the project.

The invitation letters to journalists noted the importance Turkcell attaches to qualified human resources and its desire to promote social development. These letters were sent to 350 journalists, including editors-in-chief and leading names in the media. (Turkcell Evaluation Report)

ÇYDD and Turkcell invited the Minister of State in charge of women and family affairs, the Internal Affairs Minister and the Health Minister to the press conference. Governors and kaimakams of provinces that contributed to the creation of the project also were invited. (Turkcell Evaluation Report)

The press conference was attended by 59 journalists, and it received press coverage in 43 news media. A brief scan of the project’s press coverage between August 1, 2000 and January 7, 2001 showed that 95 news articles appeared in media about the project, of which 32 were in national media, 13 in local media and 2 on Web-based news portals. News about the project also appeared on 13 television channels (50 minutes 2 seconds in total), as well as on live broadcasts on two channels. (Turkcell Evaluation Report) Both ÇYDD and Turkcell have reinforced their reputations and images through such coverage.

Implementing the “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” project involved awarding a total of TRL 100 million to students at the beginning of each semester in 2000-2001, and offering clothing, educational materials and book bags to students. The project covered students in grades 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, as the objective is to encourage students who finished elementary school to continue their secondary education and go to high school. (Turkcell Corporate Communications Project Managers interview, Dec. 26, 2003) Those proceeding

further will continue to benefit from such scholarship assistance during all of their remaining education.

The project initially targeted 5,000 girls in rural areas of 28 cities in priority development regions who could not continue their education due to lack of economic support. Later, its scope was extended to include 35 cities. (Turkcell Corporate Communication Project Manager interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

The scholarship quotas have been determined based on the number of city districts and their populations. The teachers and principals of the schools choose girls with no economic means but who are eager to continue their education. Kaimakams and governors then approve these selections. These girls are reported to ÇYDD which decides who will be able to receive a scholarship. Only one girl from a family is entitled to a scholarship. (Minibas interview) These scholarship amounts are either deposited in bank accounts opened in the name of scholarship holders at the beginning of each semester or given to students in cash during scholarship distribution ceremonies. At the beginning of each semester, urban centers hold “scholarship distribution” ceremonies attended by ÇYDD and Turkcell representatives, vice governors, kaimakams, provincial/district national education directors, national education branch office directors, teachers, scholarship holders and their families.

A requirement has been imposed on scholarship holders with respect to population planning, one of the most important and serious problems in Turkey. Each girl is required to make her mother enroll in events on family planning and to send a document proving their parents use a reliable birth control method (Minibas), which may be viewed as a useful step for these areas where modern birth control methods are unknown. Moreover scholarship holders also were required to attend 10-day “community health and family planning” courses to be held by the Ministry of Health in the summer. The objective was to ensure that they could share useful information they acquired with their families and others in their social environments.

At the beginning of the project, in order to stimulate girls to read and write, they were asked to read 5 literary and social-issue books that were sent to them and to provide a summary of these books. But this did not happen.

## **Results Achieved**

Forty-six of girls who once said they could not continue their education beyond the elementary level were sent to colleges as of 2002. In 2003, another 76 students were admitted to universities. As of 2002, Turkcell maintains the scholarships of girls who are admitted to university in the form of “fellowship”. (Turkcell Corporate Communication project Managers interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

Scholarship holders and their parents had very positive views on the project. Girls who previously would not have attended school were able to continue their educations. Parents could spend on other members of the family the amount they might have spent if their children had not won such a scholarship. Mothers seemed to be much more determined to allow their daughters to continue their education.

Some scholarship holders expressed their views and feelings as follows:

*“Fatma Yılmaz: If a test measuring the desire of studying had been held, I would have been in the top three. When I see some literate brothers and sisters in my village, I feel the desire of studying inside me grow a bit further. But I do not know how this desire in me pays off. Although our teachers are trying to do*

*as much as they can, an inadequate financial situation pins my family down. At last, I will marry after I finish high school in our village. At this time, neither my desire to study nor my diploma will serve anything. Here, like everybody else, I will try to enjoy simple things.”*

*“My name is Hediye Yüksel. I was born in Bingöl. We are five siblings. I am the youngest and I go to school. My brothers and sister left the school but I intend to continue because I want to be a nice and sophisticated person. I am very lucky because my parents let me go to school. Some parents do not, that is why I am very much annoyed about them. Everyone has the right to go to school...Some parents think they do right not sending their daughters to school, but they are wrong in my opinion. They are not aware of what problems a girl might suffer when she grows up. They say ‘what will I get, if I let my daughter go to school? She shall stay home and serve me’”*

*“Ceyla Atilla: There are many girls, aside from us, who are not sent to school in Anatolia. The main reason for that is the lack of population planning, which is a real obstacle for the development of Turkey. Moreover, girls are in need of more education than boys. That is because they are usually despised, regarded as inferior and pushed outside the society continuously. I think girls will have voice in the family if they are allowed to go to school. I have some problems with my family. In our family, boys are treated better than we are. It seems, of course, that girls have a right to nothing. Besides, I unfortunately cannot do anything I want. I have less voice in the family...”*

*“My name is Elif Demircan. I want to be a teacher. In some provinces of Turkey, girls are not sent to school. Parents deprive their daughters of education. Instead, they send their sons to school, not their daughters. In my opinion, everybody, whether girl or boy, should be allowed to continue their education...”*

*“This year I passed to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I am 15 years old. I interrupted school due to my problems. But I resumed as I love studying and I want to acquire a profession, and will carry on. I have 6 brothers and 3 sisters...Our financial situation is not good. We, all 9 siblings, are going to school. I cannot buy whatever I want.... I intend to be doctor because there is no doctor in our village. I want to help poor people, wrecked people in earthquakes. I will continue my education and achieve my ideals even if I face troubles. This will be my only target in my life...”*

If girls are allowed to continue their education, many problems that arise from a lack of education will be solved. It is likely that an educated girl will marry at an older age and according to her own preference, that she will have fewer babies, that she will have a stronger tendency to let her children go to school, that she will have more voice in her family and the community, that she will be more heavily involved in decision-making processes in the political

and social arenas, that she will find jobs more easily, that she will make significant contributions to her family budget, and that the children she raises will receive a good education as well.

In the first year of the project, Turkcell awarded a total of TRL 500 billion to students as scholarships within the framework of this project. Adding the cultural events and summer camps for students, the project cost TRL 650 to 675 billion. Turkcell did not provide figures for the breakdown of overall cost of the project. However, given the expenses such as publicity, press receptions and stationery, the total cost of this project is likely to have been twice as much of the amount of scholarships awarded each year. If that is the case, then Turkcell has probably spent about TRL 5 trillion for the project in its first 3 years.

With this project, Turkcell aimed to give the message that it is an organization that fulfills its responsibilities toward its target audience and the public. Thanks to this project, Turkcell tried to announce, to its target audience, that it attaches importance to personal development and to the education that lies behind the social development, and that it believes that a country can solve its problems only by means of education.

Zarakol Communications Agency was hired in 2003 to further develop the project and transform it into an overall Turkey project. (Turkcell Corporate Communication Project Managers interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

Turkcell called this project a social responsibility campaign and ranked it first among its other campaigns.

In 2000, Turkcell took photographs in rural areas of 10 cities showing students and education. Then it published a New Year calendar (14,000 copies) comprised of a selection of these photographs and distributed them to Turkcell subscribers, corporations that Turkcell cooperates with and media as Christmas gifts. (Turkcell Corporate Communications Project Managers interview, Dec. 26, 2003) These photos also appeared on the invoice envelopes for the purposes of reminding and re-announcing this project to Turkcell customers, who are its primary target audience. The contribution of Turkcell to this project also was reflected from time to time in its ads on print and visual media.

Turkcell held scholarship distribution ceremonies with the participation of government officials and local media in 18 cities in 2000 and 2001, and in 2002 in 22 cities. Turkcell's regional sales force was involved in the preparations for these ceremonies to ensure coordination in individual regions and inform dealers of the project. Press kits containing full information on the project were prepared to inform the local media during ceremonies. (Turkcell Corporate Communications Project Managers interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

To demonstrate the functioning of the project, Turkcell also held press junkets covering Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Mardin and Erzurum for media who specialized in educational issues.

Turkcell's corporate communications staff say that printed and visual materials distributed to media were used efficiently. And after starting the project, Turkcell conducted various surveys to find out whether its target audience was aware of the project or not. The number of respondents who answered "the Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey" to the question "What social and cultural events does Turkcell hold?" considerably increased in 2002 compared to 2001. In December 2002, a survey covering 1,200 cell phone users was conducted to test the awareness of the project; because of a small and narrowly-drawn sample, this survey failed to provide adequate data on the project's contributions to the organization itself.

In 2001, Turkcell was awarded an Excellence Award from the Institute of Public Relations (IPR), one of the most prestigious awards in the public relations field, for this project. IPR Excellence Award nominees are evaluated on the scope of the project and the overall



contribution the project makes to society. A panel comprised of public relations professionals and academics selects the winners based on each project's ultimate success at reaching its target audience. The project brought ÇYDD and Turkcell an award (first prize) in the category of "Corporate Social Responsibility" in the contest in which over 270 entrants from 54 countries in 14 categories compete with each other.

The project picked up its second international award in 2002 from Women Executives in Public Relations (WEPR). The Foundation of Women Executives in Public Relations gives Crystal Obelisk Awards for Social Responsibility, the only public relations industry awards program solely dedicated to honoring campaigns that effectively address social problems.

### **Conclusion**

The "Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey" project is being transformed into a national program. To this end in 2003, 25 female senior managers of Turkcell, together with 25 leading female columnists, reporters and executives of Turkish media, supported girls intending to proceed to university education as mentors, which is the ever first application of this genre of support in Turkey. This program was aimed at helping students conform to their new environment, be active and successful, and plan their futures as they desire. Each student was matched to a mentor and talked to her mentor for an hour on the phone each week. Interviews of mentors and students began January 10, 2004 to determine the value of the mentoring. (Turkcell Corporate Communications Public Affairs Managers interview, Dec. 26, 2003)

Thanks to this project, ÇYDD and Turkcell enjoyed the opportunity to better promote themselves to society. In the course of this project's implementation, other organizations joined them to produce some other projects for students who fail to continue their education due to financial difficulties. And in order to encourage further efforts to educate girls, the government increased the tax exemption percentages that apply to investments by the private sector in education to 100 percent from 5 percent. This project also played a significantly recreative role in reconciling the state and the society by providing direct support to students and indirect support to their families.

### **TEACHING NOTE**

#### **Purpose of the Case Study**

1. To encourage student appreciation of the importance of corporate social responsibility projects.
2. To allow students to gain an understanding of how valuable corporate social responsibility is for corporations that enjoy both tangible and intangible benefits.
3. To give students an appreciation of the importance of ongoing communication and a good relationship with priority publics, for the long-term success of any business enterprise.
4. To give students an understanding of the importance of cooperation between private sector business and non-governmental organizations.

#### **Identifying the Problem**

*As families living in socio-economically disadvantaged rural areas use their limited resources primarily for their sons, female students are not allowed to continue their education after the first stage of their formal education, and they are deprived of further educational*

*opportunities. For instance, between 1989 and 1997, no female students have been allowed to go to secondary school in Pervari, an administrative district within Siirt. The understanding that female students should not be allowed to go to school in rural areas results in the marriage of girls at early ages. They also are viewed as perfect assistants to their families. The fact that girls are unable to receive necessary education and take on heavy responsibilities at early ages has a destructive influence on the girls themselves, as well as on their social environments.*

*Naturally, to build a contemporary society is impossible without allowing individuals to receive adequate education. So Turkcell and the Association in Support of Contemporary Living wished to attract public attention to such matters by starting the Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey project.*

### **Forecasting the Most Desirable Outcome**

The most desirable outcome for Turkcell would be:

To understand its publics' needs, and meet them. Turkcell found out that its customers wanted it to give support to educational projects, according to a survey conducted in 2002.

To fulfill its responsibility towards society.

To strengthen its corporate identity and improve its image.

To improve its recognition in society and demonstrate to its rivals that it is in a different position than they are.

To maintain public attention and involvement through the most appropriate and effective use of mass media to reach quickly its primary and secondary target groups.

The most desirable outcome for the Association in Support of Contemporary Living would be:

To accomplish the association's mission.

To raise its recognition in society.

To allocate its resources to its other projects as the private sector and individuals took over funding of the project.

The collective wish of both organizations was to encourage people to allow their children to go to school in order to build a contemporary society without any sex discrimination.

### **Identifying the Critical Issues**

There are some issues at the center of the case, for Turkcell and the Association in Support of Contemporary Living:

To draw public attention to the country's young population, and its educational needs and to problems that may result from lack of education.

To disseminate adequate information through media and ensure the active involvement of journalists as opinion leaders in the campaign.

To manage relationships with female students, their families, teachers and civil authorities.

To begin to eradicate some inappropriate traditional values that restrict thoughts and behaviors of the people.

### ***Listing the Possible Solutions to the Problems***

If the income distribution and the inter-regional population increases were balanced, and if family planning was possible, especially in rural areas, it most likely would have been possible for female students to continue their education.

Turkcell and the Association in Support of Contemporary Living cooperated to solve the problem through:

A systematic information flow to the print and visual media was maintained on why this campaign was launched and its progress, and regular press junkets to relevant regions were held in order to reach mass media audiences in the quickest way.

Web sites of both organizations featured information on the campaign.

Efforts to improve the perseverance and determinedness of other female students to go to school were shown through nation-wide media publicity of the campaign.

Students involved in the campaign were required, as a prerequisite, to urge their parents to attend family planning meetings.

### ***Communicating the Solution***

When Turkcell and the Association in Support of Contemporary Living initiated the “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” campaign, they cooperated with an external public relations team. That team could ensure that media representatives attended meetings and junkets, and found the opportunity to announce, through media, speeches given by executives at those meetings and junkets.

Many journalists wrote news stories on the project, as well as on the educational and population profile of the country, the inter-regional economic disparity, public expenditures on education as a percentage of GNP, life in rural areas, the situation of traditions and education. Considerable media support was received in clarification of the problem and informing the public.

### ***Teaching the Case***

#### **One Week Earlier**

Distribute the case at least one lesson before you intend to discuss it in the classroom. Tell the students that you intend to focus on the following matters during the discussion:

- Why a company should be socially responsible.

- How valuable corporate social responsibility is for corporations who gain tangible and intangible benefits.
- Who within a corporation is responsible (make a categorical list of who they are responsible to, e.g. manifesting employee relations etc.).
- How important educational campaigns are among social responsibility projects.
- How much publicity should be part of social responsibility projects.

### First 30 Minutes of Class

Spend the first 5 to 10 minutes of the class session in a brief review of the facts of the case. Then, for the next 20 minutes, have the students identify:

How social projects may progress.

The critical issues involved in the project.

The importance of education in social life.

The publics and expectations in this case.

Use the Questions for Discussion to aid student discussion, if needed.

## **Summarize Their Answers**

Ask students to express their communication plan. What would they do if they were in the place of Turkcell and the Association in Support of Contemporary Living?

Issues to consider include:

*Strategic Communication Objectives:* What are the organizations' strategic business objectives and how can we link them directly to our communication objectives?

*Audience Analysis:* Who are we concerned with the most in terms of reach? Why do we prefer to communicate with them? What result do we hope to get when we reach them?

*Construction of Message:* What do we want to say to each of these audiences? Will our messages differ from one to another? How simple or complex should the message be?

*Selection of Medium:* How should we try to reach these publics? Should we take electronic media into consideration? How about print media? Should we telemediate our message through the press? Should we try to communicate directly with one or more opinion leaders?

*Measurement of Results:* How will we know if we have succeeded? Can international awards that we won be regarded as an indication of success? What criteria should we use to assess success? If we're not successful, what should we consider changing first? i.e. medium, message, the publics or objectives?

## **Last 15 Minutes of Class**

*Conclude the discussion. Would students have done anything differently?*

A list of suggested Questions for Discussion follows.

## Questions for Discussion

When Bernays gave a speech in Boston University in 1980, he said, “Public relations is the practice of social responsibility”. Do you agree with that?

For what reasons do corporations launch social responsibility projects?

Are “social responsibility projects” or “classical public relations campaigns” more effective to draw the media’s attention?

What are the advantages and disadvantages when a profit making corporation and a non-profit non-governmental organization cooperate in a social project?

What are the critical issues in this case?

Why did not Turkcell differentiate its target groups in this case? If it did differentiate, what would its principal target groups be? Were the communication media sufficient to reach its target groups? Why or why not?

Do you think the research conducted by Turkcell with respect to this case (before, during and after the implementation the project) was sufficient?

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**Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC)**

**Muhammad I. Ayish  
Department of Mass Communication  
United Arab Emirates University  
Al Ain, United Arab Emirates**

**and**

**Dean Kruckeberg  
Department of Communication Studies  
University of Northern Iowa  
United States**

Made possible by generous grants from  
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and the International Public Relations Association, [www.ipra.org](http://www.ipra.org)

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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

In this case study, the authors show how a public relations campaign was used by Abu Dhabi (United Arab Emirates) National Oil Company (ADNOC) to develop its corporate image as a world player in the oil industry. The campaign, which involved participation in the “International Petroleum and Petrochemical Exhibition” (IPPE ‘97) held in conjunction with the World Petroleum Congress in Beijing, China, to attract the interest of oil and gas company representatives who attended the World Petroleum Congress Nov. 11 through 15, 1997. IPPE ‘97 provided an opportunity for ADNOC to build a solid corporate image among potential international publics, particularly in Asia. However, more systematic efforts should be carried out to document the implications of the event for the company’s corporate image. Quantitative data should have been gathered on visitor characteristics, media distribution and visitor feedback.

## **The Problem**

North Americans commonly associate the Middle East with political instability, frequent warfare and ancient enmities. Further, the Arab/Muslim cultural milieu is considered to be unfathomable by many in Western society.

Such stereotypes of the Middle East are frequently misleading, however, for a geographic region that is larger and more diverse than many Westerners imagine. Nevertheless, the Arab/Muslim “worldview” is different from that which is predominant in the United States, not only ideologically but also socially and economically. Starck and Kruckeberg warn that we can never fully escape our own culture in understanding other cultures (1991, Fall, p. 25). Sriramesh and White argue that cultural differences among societies must affect how public relations is practiced by people within different societies (1992, p. 597). They argue for a culture-specific approach to public relations (1992, p. 609). Certainly, it would be reasonable to question whether public relations, as it is practiced in the United States, would be acceptable and effective in the Middle East.

The complexity of this question is compounded when a Middle East country practices “international” public relations with other “Third-World” as well as with “First-World” countries. El-Enad argues that public relations’ role in the “Third World” is not between an institution and its publics, as in the West, but between the material and nonmaterial aspects of the culture (1990, Spring, pp. 24-26). A predominant consideration when applying public relations theory and its corresponding strategies, tactics and techniques, especially in the “Third World,” must be such regions’ indigenous cultures. Such consideration begs the ultimate question of “universality” versus “relativism” of public relations theory and its corresponding strategies, tactics and techniques in different societies, all of which are invariably culture-bound.

This case study describes how a Middle East oil company used an international special event to



communicate its story to a global audience.

## **Background**

Public relations in Arab culture could be said to extend as far back as 1,200 years, and its contemporary practice must be considered in the context of Islamic ethical theory and Arabic laws. Grunig observes that philosophers of science today realize that theories are not value-free and that they cannot exist independently of the basic “worldview” of the people who develop and hold them (1992, p. 7). The term public relations is often misappropriated in the United Arab Emirates, just as it is in the United States, i.e., it is sometimes used to describe those individuals and departments whose duties may be restricted to procuring visas, arranging transportation and performing hospitality functions rather than practicing “professional” public relations responsibilities. Nevertheless, it would be a grave error to underestimate “professional” public relations practice in the United Arab Emirates.

UAE public relations agencies are virtually identical to their counterpart firms in the United States in their organizational structure as well as in their technological resources. UAE public relations agencies are primarily focused upon product publicity and marketing public relations, while offering a full-range of other public relations services. This is consistent with Harris’ estimate that 70 percent of the work performed by public relations agencies worldwide is marketing-related, with the remaining 30 percent distributed among corporate, governmental, environmental and financial public relations (1991, p. 9).

Qualitative research reported by Kruckeberg (1994) suggests that UAE agencies primarily use one-way asymmetrical press-agentry and public information models of public relations, while internal departments of government organizations fall within--or more readily approach--a two-way symmetrical model, or at least a symmetrical model having “mixed-motives.” Kruckeberg (1994) judged the company profiled in this case study as practicing a “community-building” model as espoused by Kruckeberg and Starck (1988), one that is primarily symmetrical.

Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) is the largest oil company in the United Arab Emirates. The company’s Public Relations Division used an international event to enhance its positive corporate image among an important segment of its external publics: Chinese and Asian oil importers and business communities.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was established in 1971 as a federation of seven emirates, the largest and most affluent of which is Abu Dhabi. During the past three decades, the UAE’s oil-based economy has grown at a remarkable pace, despite recent sluggish performance.

The United Arab Emirates contains proven crude oil reserves of 97.8 billion barrels, or

almost 10 percent of the world total. Abu Dhabi holds 94 percent of this amount, or about 92 billion barrels. Through the first half of 1997, the United Arab Emirates produced an estimated 2.48 million barrels per day (bbl/d), of which 2.23 million barrels per day were crude oil.

The overwhelming majority of oil operations in the United Arab Emirates are carried out by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) Group of Companies that was established in Abu Dhabi in 1971 to represent the UAE Government's interests in the oil sector. Through its majority share-holdings in the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations (ADCO), the Abu Dhabi Marine Operating Company (ADMA-OPCO), the ZaKum Development Company (ZADCO) and the Umm al-Dalkh Development Company (UDECO), ADNOC controls over 90 percent of the United Arab Emirates' daily output. The balance of shares in these companies is owned by foreign firms including British Petroleum, Shell, Exxon, Mobil, Total, Japanese Oil Development Company (JODCO) and London-based Partex (ADNOC, 1997).

Since its establishment more than a quarter of a century ago, ADNOC has come a long way in the development of its communication-support services to meet growing internal and external public relations needs. Although public relations existed at ADNOC since its incorporation, the functions of this sector were carried out in close conjunction with marketing activities. Growing awareness among ADNOC Companies' CEOs and communication/marketing staff of the benefits of public relations for an organization of ADNOC's caliber led to the establishment of the Public Relations Division that would be independent from the Marketing Directorate in undertaking all internal communications inside ADNOC's Groups of Companies as well as communications with external publics inside and outside the United Arab Emirates. Employing nearly 30 staff by the end of 1997, ADNOC's Public Relations Division consists of three departments: Media and Publications, Library and Audiovisual Center, and Local Relations. The Media and Publications Department is responsible for the these activities: 1) supervising the production of several Arabic-English publications such as *ADNOC News*, *Oil News*, *ADNOC Sports*, *ADNOC People*, *Non-Stop* and others; 2) building and maintaining a web site (URL: [http://www.adnoc.com /environmentlpolicies/index.htm](http://www.adnoc.com/environmentlpolicies/index.htm)) with up-to-date information on ADNOC's oil drilling operations, marketing activities and human resources; 3) producing a comprehensive CD-based database covering all aspects of ADNOC's activities for distribution at oil exhibitions and international conferences, and 4) coordinating relations with media organizations in the United Arab Emirates and supplying UAE media with a constant flow of information.

The Library and Audiovisual Centre was established in 1975 to provide ADNOC employees with all information services related to their jobs. The library contains on-line services (Dialog and Lexis-Nexis), Internet access, Intranet links and 13,000 volumes of technical references. In 1997, a new state-of-the-art system with back-screen projection was

installed at the Centre's presentation room.

The Local Relations Department is responsible for government relations, employee relations, security, visitor arrangements, hotel receptions/banquets and airport reception. This department organizes a range of social activities for employees and their families such as picnics, sporting events and cultural activities.

The central position of public relations in ADNOC's tactical day-to-day as well as long-term strategic programs is evident in the close relationship of the Public Relations Division to the company's top management. A former manager of ADNOC's Public Relations Division once noted that public relations is so important to ADNOC that it is not unusual for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to attend a meeting accompanied by both his legal and public relations advisors. The current public relations manager, Mr. Hulaiman Al-Hamly, completely agrees with this perception of public relations' vital role, especially when it comes to managing communications with a wide range of clients, such as partner companies, oil importers and the public-at-large consumers of ADNOC's products.

ADNOC's public relations functions include advising management on the company's corporate image; coordinating with the ADMA-OPCO and ADNOC Directorates in the implementation of public relations-related policies; enhancing ADNOC's corporate identity locally, regionally and internationally; providing an efficient delivery of information services through the Library and Audiovisual Centre; establishing favorable relations with government agencies and local government departments as well as foreign embassies in the United Arab Emirates; and providing travel services, banquets, reception, local transportation and escort services for VIPs. ADNOC defines its publics as including the United Arab Emirates government, media, employees, customers and shareholders/industrial partners.

In seeking to reinforce a solid corporate image, ADNOC's Public Relations Division draws on a range of themes. These include: a bright performance record; ambitions for the future; professionalism in the context of a rewarding working environment; acquisition of state-of-the-art technologies; commitment to quality; systematic nationalization; commitment to high safety and health standards, and environmental protection; and fair treatment of all customers and suppliers. These image components are manifested in ADNOC's public relations outputs including well-written media releases; high-quality publications; standardized business cards and employee uniforms; sleek Internet sites workshops on issues of significance to the oil company; and participation in national and international events.

Although ADNOC's logo has traditionally consisted of a black-and-white falcon superimposed on a blue rectangular background, the logo's simplicity and sky-color component reflect the company's significant environmental awareness. ADNOC has developed a "Group

Policy” on environmental issues that requires industrial activities to be carried out in a manner designed to minimize health, safety and environmental risks and to protect the health and safety of employees, contractors, customers and the community-at-large as well as the environment in which the Group activities are conducted. The company maintains a Crisis Management Team (CMT) to deal with crisis situations, using an internationally recognized standard for crisis response called the Incident Command System (ICS). The system clearly designates the roles and responsibilities for crisis response by key management groups. In late 1997, ADNOC’s Public Relations Division organized a workshop on crisis management to help the company staff to prepare for the effective handling of potential risk situations. It also assisted in organizing the “ADNOC Health, Safety and Environment Award” for employees and contractors who have good records in enhancing health-and-safety standards as well as in preserving the environment.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Southeast Asian countries are becoming increasingly important UAE trading partners. For example, Japan imports over 63 percent of its oil from the United Arab Emirates, which, in turn, imports more than \$600 million in goods and services from Asian countries each year. As part of a strategy to diversify its oil-based economy, the United Arab Emirates has sought to attract Asian investors into its lucrative non-oil market sectors and, at the same time, to create external demands for its products in Asian countries. A recent conference on Asian perspectives on Arabian Gulf countries noted that the two regions are likely to maintain long-term relationships of mutual economic dependence (Conference on Asian Perspectives Towards the Arab Gulf, 1997, Nov.15-16).

ADNOC’s involvement in international oil-related activities, such as conferences and exhibitions, has been a major strategy underlying the development of its corporate image as a world player in the oil sector. Inspired by Asia’s booming economies and promising markets, the ADNOC Group of Companies participated in the “International Petroleum and Petrochemical Exhibition (IPPE ‘97)” held in conjunction with the World Petroleum Congress (WPC) in Beijing, China, Nov. 11-15, 1997.

The initial idea for participation was originated by staff in the Marketing Directorate who called on the Public Relations Division to produce some publications for distribution at the event. Yet, as the Public Relations Division manager noted, it was felt that Public Relations Division staff should participate fully through involvement, establishing contacts with IPPE ‘97 organizers, setting up ADNOC’s exhibit and making themselves available to visitors at the exhibition.

Nearly 4,300 people from 88 countries attended the World Petroleum Congress that was organized under the theme “Technology and Leadership in Oil Industry.” Sixty-eight of the participants were international and Chinese oil company chief executive officers as well as

representatives from internationally known energy and oil organizations. The exhibition was an opportunity for companies in the oil industry (such as ADNOC) to display their drilling-and-refining equipment, petrochemical products, natural gas transport systems, production-and-processing machinery and pollution control systems.

ADNOC had two objectives for participating in the IPPE '97: 1) to highlight the company's role as a leading organization with an international reputation in the oil-and-gas industry, and 2) to familiarize the Chinese business community with ADNOC's products and services, especially in the petrochemical industries sector (ADNOC Group Takes Part in Beijing Exhibition, 1997, Oct., pp. 14-15).

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

ADNOC Group of Companies' delegation to the IPPE '97 was headed by Mr. Hulaiman Al Hamly, ADNOC's Public Relations Division manager. The Group sponsored an extensive exhibit that featured logos of subsidiary companies such as Abu Dhabi Gas Liquefaction Ltd. (ADGAS), Abu Dhabi Gas Industries, Ltd. (GASCO) and ADCO, in addition to ADNOC's main logo. Processing and Marketing Directorates staff participated in the event, together with representatives from ADGAS, ADCO, Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC-FOD) and Ruwais Teitilyeu Industries (FERTIL).

ADNOC Group staff promoted the company's high-quality, award-winning products. These staff members briefed visitors on the UAE's business environment and on opportunities that are available for international investors. The display contained printed materials on the ADNOC Group of Companies and their petrochemical products, compact disc-based databases and data-show presentations. The United Arab Emirates ambassador to China as well as the UAE delegation to the World Petroleum Congress were present at the exhibition.

### **Results Achieved**

Company sources said the ADNOC Group exhibit attracted a large number of visitors. They included dignitaries such as: the ambassadors of the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman and Belgium; the Chinese Vice Premier; official delegates who were participating in the World Petroleum Congress; and members of the Chinese and Asian business communities. Upon his visit to the ADNOC exhibit, the Chinese Vice Premier was honored with a symbolic gift that was presented to him by the UAE ambassador to China.

"The China exhibition was one of the most important events to be staged in East Asia," said Shukri Al-Haddad of ADNOC-FOD. "The ADNOC Group's participation in that fair proved to be successful and attracted interest from various representatives of oil and gas companies" (Staff Talk About Their Experiences in China, 1997, November, pp. 1, 3).

Jamal Al Awartani, another member of the UAE team who participated in the fair, said, “All visitors had shown great interest in our products and services, and this reflects the important role the ADNOC Group plays in world oil and gas markets” (Ibid.). Nasser Al Jassmi of ADGAS noted that his company’s participation in the event had given it an extra incentive to closely observe the Chinese market. He added that the exhibition had proven to be a success, considering the large number of companies that had participated in it (Ibid.).

## **Conclusion**

ADNOC’s participation in IPPE ‘97 underscores the centrality of reinforcing the company’s international visibility as a major world player in the oil sector. Realizing that the World Petroleum Conference would attract thousands of people who represented the growing world oil industry, ADNOC’s top management--upon advice from the Public Relations Division--saw IPPE ‘97 as a golden opportunity to build a solid corporate image for the company among potential international publics and particularly in Asia. The centrality of ADNOC’s participation in the event was highlighted by the large ADNOC marketing and public relations delegation, headed by the manager of ADNOC’s Public Relations Division, himself.

The large number of visitors at the ADNOC exhibit, as reported by ADNOC participants, suggests remarkable public relations gains by this UAE oil company. Hundreds of pamphlets and compact discs were distributed at the event to interested visitors. In the meantime, staff representing the company’s subsidiaries were active at the interpersonal level in communicating ADNOC’s goals, philosophies and prospects for cooperation.

Public relations at ADNOC, as with its counterparts in other UAE organizations, continues to be practiced in association with marketing activities, despite the structural independence of both sectors. Much effort was exerted during the IPPE ‘97 event to develop good customer relations. Thus, one might see more emphasis on finding business clients (importers of crude oil or petrochemical products) based on immediate mutual economic benefits than on strategic relationships. The dual public relations-marketing approach to IPPE ‘97 might be justified by noting that ADNOC already has a worldwide reputation and that the event should be utilized to build on that reputation by “getting down to business with customers.” Yet, the large number of participants in the World Petroleum Congress and visitors to the exhibit should be a catalyst to increase public relations among new publics.

More systematic efforts must be carried out to document the implications of the event for the company’s corporate image. Views expressed by participating ADNOC staff provide a good insight into the degree of interaction between ADNOC’s activities and the surrounding environment, but these views should be systematized at future events by providing quantitative data on visitor characteristics, media distribution and visitor feedback. Such data could then be evaluated in relation to further developments pertaining to ADNOC’s corporate image and marketing performance in the long run.

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**Samsung Spirit of Sport Contest  
Samsung's Olympic Campaign in the U.S.**

**Jooho Kim  
Director & Chief of Public Relations Team  
Cheil Communications  
Seoul, 140-739, Korea  
e-mail: [jhkim@cheil.co.kr](mailto:jhkim@cheil.co.kr)**

**and**

**Samsup Jo  
Assistant Professor  
School of Mass Communications  
Texas Tech University  
e-mail: [josamsup@sookmyung.ac.kr](mailto:josamsup@sookmyung.ac.kr)**

Made possible by generous grants from  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education

University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400

Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)



## **Executive Summary**

Samsung developed a program that leveraged Samsung's sponsorship of the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games to boost the company's ever-increasing share of the U.S. and global cell phone market and reinforce its commitment to connecting people and communities through sports. Utilizing research that indicated a strong consumer connection between cell phones and staying in touch with family members, Samsung developed a broad-based communications program, Samsung Spirit of Sport Contest, to promote the brand through its association with the world's premiere sporting event.

The Samsung Spirit of Sport Contest was an essay contest centered on the value of sports mentors and how involvement in sports can positively influence the life of a young person. Complementing Samsung's role as the Official Worldwide Telecommunications Equipment Partner for the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games, the contest asked entrants, in a short essay, to identify a person who motivated them to participate in sports and describe how that encouragement changed their lives both on and off the playing field.

The entries were judged by panels that included former Olympic gold medal winners Bonnie Blair and Eric Bergoust, and five winners were chosen from across the U.S. Each of the winners, along with their sports mentor, received a trip to the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games. The winners and their mentors were honored at the Olympic Rendezvous @ Samsung (OR@S) in Salt Lake Olympic Square in a ceremony hosted by Blair and Bergoust.

Samsung's Spirit of Sport Contest received extensive media coverage. Consumer awareness of Samsung increased and Samsung was positioned as an international corporation dedicated to the local community.

## **Problem Statement**

Samsung Electronics signed a TOP (The Olympic Partner) sponsorship agreement in 1997, becoming a worldwide partner in the Olympic movement in the product category of wireless telecommunications equipment. Its core businesses include digital media, information and communications electronics and other similar products. As of 2001, Samsung Electronics operated offices and factories in 46 countries, employing 66,000 people worldwide. Samsung Electronics recorded sales of \$34.6 billion and a net income of \$ 4.8 billion in a consolidated base in 2001. Samsung is the world's largest producer of CDMA (code division multiple access) mobile phones and the fifth largest manufacturer of mobile phones.

Samsung's ultimate goal is to be a global leader in the wireless telecommunication market. However, Samsung is behind its competitors. Nokia and Motorola are the leading companies in brand awareness and market share. The Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games was a good opportunity for Samsung to enhance its brand awareness and continue to grow its market share in the U.S. and in key markets around the world.

## **Background**

Salt Lake City hosted the XIX Olympic Winter Games with 2,399 Olympic athletes from 77 countries from February 8 through 24, 2002. (International Olympic Committee)

For the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games, Samsung provided approximately 20,000 of its latest digital mobile communications products, including mobile phones, and technical experts in its role as an official Wireless Communications Equipment Partner. After providing officials, athletes, staff, volunteers and visitors with fast and reliable communications during the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, Samsung Electronics wanted to continue to contribute to the

success of the Games and its ultimate mission of fostering unity among members of the global community. As an official Wireless Communications Equipment Partner, Samsung used its leading edge mobile technology to reunite Olympians and their families all over the world and helped athletes and their families share the spirit of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Samsung is also the first corporate sponsor of the Community Olympic Development Program (CODP), an initiative established to bridge introductory sports programs and elite national team programs. The CODP is currently operating in Atlanta, Salt Lake City, San Antonio and Minneapolis, and provides gifted junior high and high school athletes with a clear pathway to development in Olympic sports. The program offers sports that are not widely available to teens such as fencing, luge and cross country skiing and helps local communities tap into the Olympic movement by encouraging coaches, volunteers and children to get involved with Olympic sports. Samsung has made a financial donation to support the CODP program in the United States.

In response to research showing that 58 percent of consumers purchase cell phones as a way to stay connected with family members and loved ones (Gartner), Samsung was challenged to develop a communications program that would enable Samsung to embrace this trend and link it with the ideals of the Olympic movement, the Olympic spirit and Samsung's goal of connecting people and communities through sports.

Ninety percent of average consumers recognize the Olympic rings, 74 percent identify this logo with success and high standards and 63 percent say that they would buy a product stamped with the Olympic trademark. This indicated that the Olympic image has valuable equity and an association worthy of Samsung. (Samsung Electronics, Marketing Report) Another study, conducted by Decima Research during the 1988 Seoul Olympics, also revealed that 59 percent of all respondents were more likely to purchase an Olympic sponsors' products, 74 percent had a better perception of a sponsor and 76 percent believed the sponsors to be the leaders in their industry. (Duport)

Target audiences Samsung tried to reach were mainly general consumers in the U.S. and Olympic family and sports-related bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the Olympic Winter Games (SLOC), and The United States Olympic Committee (USOC). Among media, Samsung concentrated on general newspapers, TV stations (business and sports news programs), and business and trade publications globally.

### **Goals and Objectives of the Campaign**

Building on Samsung's commitment to connecting people through sports, Samsung outlined three main public relations objectives for its involvement in the Salt Lake City Olympic Games:

- Position Samsung as a corporate citizen dedicated to connecting people and communities through sports.

- Raise awareness of Samsung's role as a vital Olympic partner.

- Showcase Samsung as a dynamic brand in the U.S.A. market.

In addition, Samsung took into account the company's main brand, along with the attribute of "inclusiveness," and developed a program to express two overriding key messages:

- Samsung cares about the importance of people staying connected.

Samsung brings families together and bridges people and communities through sports and the Olympic Games.

Samsung Electronics established, as a public relations tactic, the Samsung Spirit of Sport Contest, a national essay contest enabling consumers to honor and appreciate sports mentors who changed their lives. This tactic supported Samsung's main public relations objectives and successfully reinforced its key messages.

## Strategic Tactics and Techniques

### Overview

In line with Samsung's global commitment to connecting people through sports and the Olympic Games, Samsung developed an essay contest that enabled athletes to appreciate the sports mentors that changed their lives. The Samsung Spirit of Sport essay contest was created by Cheil Communications, a leading public relations and advertising agency in South Korea, and Edelman, a U.S. public relations agency, as a way for winners and their mentors to celebrate the importance of mentoring and reward mentors with the ultimate sporting experience: a trip to the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Staying true to Samsung's central theme at the Games, the "Spirit of Sport" essay contest emphasized the ways that sports can bring people together and change lives for the better. The contest was executed from October 8 to November 26, 2001 on a special section of Samsung's web site that was designed specifically to promote the company's Olympic involvement. The contest was open to all U.S. residents 13 and older. To promote entries, Samsung tagged existing print advertising with information about the contest and utilized existing online advertising to promote the contest through banner ads on sites such as AOL, Spinner, Teen People, Warner Brothers, Winamp, CNNSI and EA. Samsung Electronics also leveraged athlete spokespersons in broadcasting and print media for interviews.

In addition, Edelman Interactive Services (EIS) worked to place the contest in Internet search engines and on contest Web sites to assist in attracting entries.

### *Athlete Spokespeople and Mentors*

Samsung Electronics contracted with speed skater Bonnie Blair and aerial skier Eric Bergoust to serve as spokespersons for the contest and participate in a public relations campaign. (Samsung Electronics, Press Information) The campaign aimed to drive entries, promote the positive and inspirational stories of contest winners and showcase Samsung's commitment to consumers. Blair and Bergoust were closely involved with the execution of the contest, serving as judges for the essays and also sharing their personal mentoring experiences on Samsung's Olympic Web site. They wrote essays on each of their mentors to inspire people to enter the essay contest.

Bonnie Blair is the most decorated woman in U.S. Olympic history and is the only U.S. Winter Olympian to win the gold medal in the same event in three consecutive Olympic Games. Blair won a staggering five gold medals in the three Olympic Winter Games from 1988-1994. When Blair won her first Olympic gold medal, the first person she searched for in the crowds at the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, Canada, was her father. "The first people I saw were dad and mom," Bonnie said. "Dad was so happy. There was the biggest smile on his face that I have ever seen." For Blair, who is now retired from sports, it was her parents who set her on track for success. For years, Charles and Eleanor Blair willingly gave up vacations and weekends, spending their time and money taking Bonnie and her siblings to skating practices and

competitions. Her father was particularly involved with Bonnie's training, shuttling her from practice to practice, volunteering as a race timer and even setting up toilet plungers as makeshift lane barriers on the rink during practice sessions. "My dad was my mentor both professionally and personally," Blair said. "He taught me that you have to be both a gracious winner and loser, set goals in life and maintain a positive outlook. You can do all the right work, but it's the right attitude that makes the difference." Now a mother of two, Blair hopes to pass what her father taught her along to her children as well as other kids who may look to learn from her success.

Eric Bergoust is a resident of Park City, Utah, one of the Olympic Winter Games venues. He is a 1998 Nagano Olympic gold medalist and the world's top-ranked aerial skier. Bergoust credits his older brother Todd with boosting his success. When Bergoust was 12 years old, his older brother took him skiing for the first time. Bergoust seemed well-suited for the sport: he was known to be somewhat of a daredevil, frequently jumping off the chimney of his family's Montana home onto a pile of bedsprings. However, his first foray on the slopes was a far cry from the Olympic success he was later to achieve. To Bergoust, his brother not only introduced him to his dreams, he also helped to shape his mindset for success. "He always would tell me, 'If you're going to do something, you should do it all out. You should aim to be better than the best,'" Bergoust said. "He taught me perfectionism and attention to detail. But he also taught me how to dream at a really young age and to ignore the negative emotions that say I can't do it." Throughout his career, Bergoust says he has learned a lot from many people. And he advises other youth to do the same. "I would encourage kids to seek out many mentors," he said. "Ask lots of questions and don't worry about looking stupid. People are flattered to be asked things. Mentoring is an important, natural process. You can learn what it might have taken someone else 10 years to learn in 10 minutes. Sharing knowledge and supporting each other makes us a better human race."

#### *Pre-Games Activities*

Contest-related media outreach focused on stimulating entries during the entry period in the fall and later publicizing the winners and their mentors during their trip to the Games.

Samsung kicked off the campaign at the USOC Media Summit attended by more than 600 U.S. media on October 18, 2001. Samsung also announced the company's new relationships with Bergoust and Blair. The first press release was entitled, "Samsung's 2002 Olympic Program to Keep Athletes, Fans Connected with Friends, Family." The subtitle of the press release was as follows: "Olympic Gold Medalists Bonnie Blair and Eric Bergoust Spreading the Word about the Importance of Sports Mentoring and Helping Judge Samsung's Spirit of Sport Contest."

To promote the contest and help generate entries, Samsung scheduled each of the contest spokespersons to participate in separate media activities. Samsung had planned to coordinate a New York media tour for Blair in early October to "kick off" the contest, but had to change strategies due the effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Samsung surveyed the media both in New York and other major markets to determine the potential likelihood media would cover non-September 11 related events. The company determined that the timing wasn't favorable and it wouldn't be effective to propose a full New York media day to promote the contest. Samsung did, however, capitalize on an existing visit to New York for Blair on October 15 and was able to book her on the CBS "Early Show" and Oxygen's "Pure Oxygen" to talk about the contest and Samsung's commitment to mentoring.

In lieu of the New York media day, Samsung coordinated a satellite media tour on November 6 with Blair from Salt Lake City, which resulted in interviews with 18 local television

affiliates around the country, 15 of them in major markets such as Chicago, San Francisco and Phoenix. The broadcasting stations included WAWS-TV (FOX), KARE-TV (NBC), KUSA-TV (NBC), KCRA-TV (NBC), WAND (ABC), KMTV (CBS), WLUK-TV (FOX), KVIA-TV (ABC), KPNX-TV (NBC), WNUV-TV (WB), WBFF-TV (FOX), KTVX-TV (ABC), WMBD-TV (CBS), WBRC-TV (FOX), USA Radio Network, KTBC-TV (FOX), and WCVB-TV (ABC). During the interviews, Blair was able to successfully work in key Samsung branding and contest messages. Following is the media advisory for the satellite interview with Blair.

*LIVE INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY*  
MOST DECORATED U.S. WINTER OLYMPIAN  
BONNIE BLAIR SPEAKS OUT ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF MENTORING

**WHO:** Bonnie Blair skated into the record books and the hearts of Americans by winning six Olympic medals. Today, Blair is helping her husband train in speedskating in hopes of making the 2002 Olympic team, while continuing to be a role model and inspiration to young people everywhere.

**WHAT:** Blair is available for live/taped interviews to discuss the importance of mentoring for young people, the positive impact it had on her life and a national contest to help people give back to their mentors.

The Samsung “Spirit of Sport” Olympic essay contest encourages people to identify a person who motivated them to participate in sports and describe how that changed their lives both on and off the playing field. Winners – and their mentors – will be flown to Salt Lake City for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. Entries can be submitted at [www.samsungelectronics.com](http://www.samsungelectronics.com). Now a mother of two, Bonnie hopes to pass what her father taught her along to her children as well as other kids who may look to her for success.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, November 6 7:30 am-10:00 am ET

In addition, Bergoust spent time at East High School in Salt Lake City, an event Samsung arranged, to speak to the student body of nearly 600 about the value of mentoring and how his personal mentor was a major factor in helping him win gold at the 1998 Nagano Games. Immediately following the event, Samsung e-mailed digital photos of the event to the local newspapers and hand-delivered b-rolls of the event to the local television affiliates. Samsung sent out the following media alert:

***MEDIA ALERT***

OLYMPIC GOLD AERIAL SKIER ERIC BERGOUST LANDS AT SALT LAKE’S

## EAST HIGH SCHOOL

*World's Premier Aerial Skier to Visit Local High School to Discuss*

### ***Importance of Mentoring and Help Launch National Mentoring Contest***

**WHAT:** Current World Champion aerial skier Eric Bergoust will speak to East High School students about the important role mentoring played in his road to Olympic Gold. He will also share insights into what it takes to be a champion on and off the slopes.

Eric will also help people reward their mentors through the launch of the Samsung "Spirit of Sport" essay contest. Five winners and their mentors will win with a free trip to the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Students will have a chance to share their essays about mentoring and ask questions of the Olympic hopeful.

**WHO:** ERIC BERGOUST: 1998 Olympic Gold Medalist and current World Champion, Aerial Skiing.

Eric, a resident of Park City, is the world's top aerial skier and will defend his Olympic title during the upcoming 2002 Games. He has dominated one of the world's most dynamic sports, capturing Olympic and World Championship titles, and becoming the first skier to land a quadruple jump in competition.

**WHERE:** East High School Field House  
840 S. 1300 East  
(801) 583-1661

**WHEN:** Wednesday, October 17  
11:00 am -12:00 noon

### *Activities at the Games*

The five winners of the Samsung Spirit of Sport essay contest were honored at the 2002 Salt Lake Olympic Winter Games in a special ceremony that took place at Olympic Rendezvous @ Samsung (OR@S), Samsung's product showcase and athlete hospitality center. Samsung's news release announced the contest winners as follows: "Five Contest Winners and Their Sports Mentors Honored at 2002 Olympic Winter Games. Olympic Gold Medal Winners Bonnie Blair And Eric Bergoust Celebrate With Five Winners of the Samsung Spirit Of Sport Contest And Their Mentors."

As part of the grand prize package, each winner and his or her mentor received a trip to the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. Each of the winners had an inspiring story:

Annie Christenson, a 28-year-old who lives in New York City, wrote about her father, Gary, who raised Annie and her siblings in Southern California and used sports to help bring the family closer together.

Kelly Wolfe, a 36-year-old native of Battle Creek, Michigan, described her high school track coach and art teacher, Thomas Tenney, who literally helped her turn her life around when she entered ninth grade.

Michael Markovitch, a 32-year-old 911 dispatcher from San Angelo, Texas, used his essay to thank his wife, Deanna, who encouraged her husband to again try many of the sports he participated in as a child but had since stopped playing.

Michael Cramer, a 28-year-old originally from the Boston area now living in New York City, wrote about how he and his father, Vin, were able to bond through sports and how his father used sports to help teach many important life lessons.

Peter Marino, a 32-year-old MBA student at UCLA originally from Milwaukee, described how his father, Nick, used sports to instill a fighting spirit in him that helped him achieve great things.

Once the winners were selected, Samsung contacted the winners and interviewed them in order to gather further information for media outreach. Samsung drafted individual press releases on the winners and their mentors for local hometown media. Samsung also compiled a media list for each winner's hometown market.

On Wednesday, February 20, 2002, Samsung hosted the contest winners and their mentors at the OR@S for a special ceremony. OR@S was a major attraction in Salt Lake Olympic Square. After a successful launch in 2000 at the Sydney Olympic Games, the OR@S returned for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and gave Samsung a very visible presence in Salt Lake City. In 2002, the OR@S hosted Olympic families and spectators and featured daily entertainment shows, athlete appearances and futuristic product displays. The OR@S showcased Samsung's expertise in digital wireless telecommunications equipment and provided fans and athletes with the opportunity to interact with the equipment and technology.

Cheil Communications and Edelman coordinated the ceremony at Samsung's onsite venue to honor the contest winners and their mentors. The five winners and their mentors were brought on stage and interviewed by guest emcees Blair and Bergoust. The two athlete spokespersons told their mentor stories to the media in attendance and an Olympic crowd of nearly 300 fans.

This prize-giving event was pitched to both print and broadcast media in the winners' and mentors' local markets. These markets included New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Milwaukee, Central Texas (San Angelo) and Western Michigan (Battle Creek).

In addition, B-roll was fed on the satellite, hard copies of B-roll were distributed to on-site television affiliates and digital images were sent to print outlets in the local markets. A television crew from KNBC-TV (NBC, Los Angeles) and a photographer from the *Honolulu Advertiser* were in attendance at the event. The B-roll was picked up by both WDJT-TV (CBS) and WTMJ-TV (NBC) in Milwaukee. Two stations in Grand Rapids, Michigan – WOOD-TV (NBC) and WZZM-TV (ABC) – interviewed Kelly Wolfe, the contest winner from Battle Creek, when she returned home. In addition, the *San Antonio Express News* ran a note about the winning pair from Texas.

## **Results Achieved**

According to a survey conducted in eight major U.S. cities after the Salt Lake Games, brand awareness of Samsung as an Olympic sponsor increased by 8.9 percent and the overall opinion of consumers toward Samsung rose 2.8 percent from a similar survey conducted prior to the Games. (Samsung Marketing Report)

Through online public relations activities, Samsung generated 36,000,000 impressions to drive over 70,000 consumers to the contest page (FCBi).

The public relations efforts of Cheil Communications and Edelman netted more than 50 media placements for the “Spirit of Sport” contest. The campaign kicked off with national coverage on the CBS Early Show and Oxygen, and continued with nearly 20 broadcast segments via the satellite media tour in major markets such as Chicago (Fox), Boston (NBC) and Phoenix (NBC). In addition, on-site coverage at the media event for the winners netted coverage on NBC affiliates - - including KNBC in Los Angeles and KTJ in Milwaukee- - and print outlets in Salt Lake City

Contest winner Anne Christenson’s interview with NBC-TV showcased the importance of the Spirit of Sports essay contest, mentors and the role of Samsung as an Olympic partner. She said winning the essay contest brought her the most incredible experience that she ever had, attending the Winter Olympic Games. She said she lived in New York and her father lived in California, and being together at the Games was a great chance for them to share the most important values they haven’t talked about for a while and to enjoy the Olympic Games.

## **Conclusion:**

“The Olympic Games has broader broadcast appeal worldwide than television coverage of any other sporting event, attracting a substantially greater audience across all demographic groups, including television viewers who generally have no interest in sport,” said Gerhard Heiberg, Chairman, IOC Marketing Commission. An estimated 2.1 billion viewers from 160 countries consumed over 13 billion viewing hours during the 2002 Winter Games. When all forms of coverage are taken into account, it is estimated that approximately 3 billion people were exposed to the 2002 Olympic Winter Games (International Olympic Committee).

Contracting with high profile U.S. athletes was very valuable to executing a successful essay contest. In addition, it was appropriate to combine the contest with other Samsung Olympic programs such as the Community Olympic Development Program and Olympic Rendezvous@Samsung.

However, the tragedy of September 11, 2001 was a big challenge for Samsung and the Spirit of Sports Contest. It was difficult to create Samsung stories when the USA and the World were focused on terrorist attack stories. As a result, Samsung received fewer entries than expected. Samsung originally planned to hold the essay contest in about 10 countries which Samsung was targeting in its product marketing. The plan had to be scaled down due to 9-11 and budgetary concerns.

If Samsung is to continue the contest in future games, it needs to expand the Spirit of Sports Contest internationally to a level suitable to Olympic sponsorship.



## TEACHING NOTE

### **Purpose of the Case Study**

1. To provide students with an understanding of the international public relations activities executed by global corporations in the U.S.
2. To make clear to students the importance of the public relations tactics associated with corporate sponsorship of the Olympic games.
3. To encourage students to understand how a foreign corporation attempts to increase its name recognition and awareness among the stakeholders in its U.S. market.

### **Identifying the Corporate Issues**

Salt Lake City hosted the XIX Olympic Winter Games with 2,399 Olympic athletes from 77 countries participating between February 8 and 24, 2002. For the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games, Samsung Electronics provided approximately 20,000 of its latest digital mobile communications products, including mobile phones and other products, as an official wireless communications equipment partner. After providing officials, athletes, staff, volunteers and visitors with fast and reliable communications during the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, Samsung Electronics hoped to continue to contribute to the success of the Olympic Games and to its ultimate mission of fostering unity among members of the global community. As an official wireless communications equipment partner, Samsung used its leading edge mobile technology to reunite Olympians and their families all over the world and helped athletes and their families share the spirit of the 2002 Olympic Winter Games with family and friends.

Samsung Electronics hoped to achieve an increased corporate reputation in the U.S. market through its corporate sponsorship of the Winter Olympic Games.

### **Explaining How to Communicate as an Official Olympic Sponsor**

This case illustrates how a global corporation boosted its name recognition in a target market outside of its country of origin. The Olympic games have become the most popular worldwide sports festival for corporate sponsorship because of extensive media coverage. This case also shows that Samsung wants to take advantage of the opportunity to leverage its name in the U.S. market beyond a sponsorship status. This case provides the important linkage between public relations tactics and PR's association with the essence of sponsorship. This includes use of a relevant spokesperson and creativity to attract media attention. In addition, the case can provide an illustration of how a foreign corporation can collaborate with a local public relations firm in another country to come up with a public relations strategy and tactics that fit with the local culture and media environment.

### ***Teaching the Case***

#### **The First 30 minutes of Class**

Spend the first 5 to 10 minutes of the class initiating the discussion of the Olympic games: focus on image, corporate sponsorship, and any athletes the students are aware of. Then, for the next 20 minutes, have the students identify the following:

The public relations tactics used by any Olympic sponsor related to the Olympic games.  
The major reasons for corporations to be interested in the sponsorship of the sports events (e.g., Nokia Sugar Bowl, Sony PGA).

The linkage between global corporations and their public relations strategy and tactics in the U.S. as an official sponsor of the Olympic games.

How consumers in the U.S. perceive the sports event: Does sponsorship really affect the bottom line of the corporation, such as sales or profits? What ultimate goals can global corporations achieve with sponsorship?

## **Summarize Their Responses**

Ask students what public relations tactics they would use if they were public relations practitioners at Samsung Electronics. The desirable outcome would be to increase Samsung's awareness in the minds of consumers in the U.S. due to the extensive exposure of media coverage. What would they have done if they want to plan a special event during the Winter Olympic Games as an official sponsor of a wireless communication company?

Issues to consider include:

Audience Analysis: Who does Samsung Electronics want to reach with its message?  
What are the major reasons Samsung Electronics wants to reach this audience?

Message Strategy: What does Samsung Electronics want to say to consumers about its corporate sponsorship of the Winter Olympic games?

Public Relations Strategy: How should Samsung take advantage of the opportunity of official sponsorship of Olympic sponsorship?

Public Relations Tactics: What are creative tactics Samsung would want to use to promote Samsung's name and increase its name exposure in the media? How should Samsung relate its sponsorship of Winter Olympic games to its public relations tactics?

Measurement of Outcomes: How can we evaluate the campaign's success? What are the possible measures that could be used to evaluate the public relations campaign?

## **Last 15 Minutes of Class**

*Explain the actual tactics used in the "Samsung Sprit of Essay Contest" to the students. Allow students to discuss the case and have them evaluate the case. Use the following suggested questions to initiate student discussion. Would they have done anything differently? Emphasize there is no right or wrong answer to the following questions.*

## ***Questions for Discussion***

What are the creative elements of the public relations tactics?

Do the public relations tactics make good use of the characteristics of the corporate sponsorship-Winter Olympic Games?

Do the public relations tactics attract media attention? To what extent will the public relations events get attention from the media? Why?

How does Samsung use spokespersons to promote its public relations goal? Was using celebrities effective?

How could Samsung have reduced the aftermath of September 11 on the number of entries?

How would you evaluate the overall success of the Samsung Spirit of Sport Essay Contest?

How would you have measured the success of the campaign differently? What would be the ultimate possible success of a public relations campaign like the “Samsung Spirit of Sport Essay Contest”?

How does a client (Samsung) collaborate with a local public relations firm (Edelman Public Relations) to manage a public relations campaign? If you needed to conduct a public relations campaign in a foreign country (e.g., China, Japan, South Korea), how would you plan and manage the public relations campaign with regard to the use of a local public relations firm? Does a client need to hire a local public relations firm in a foreign country?

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**Australia's "Together We Do Better" Campaign:  
Diversifying Mental Health Benefits for Local Communities**

**Meta G. Carstarphen, Ph.D.**  
**Associate Professor**  
**Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication**  
**University of Oklahoma**  
**Norman, Oklahoma USA**  
**e-mail: [mcarstarphen@ou.edu](mailto:mcarstarphen@ou.edu)**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

Australia, both a continent and a country, straddles an Eastern geography and a Western cultural sensibility. Situated adjacent to the Pacific's Asian rim, Australia began the 20<sup>th</sup> century making its first tentative steps toward nationhood on January 1, 1901. The emerging Australia fostered a common desire among its initial alliance of six states for political independence, European identity and a strong link to Great Britain as a member of the Commonwealth. A century later, contemporary Australia faces the challenge of reconciling its colonial history with the more ancient past of its indigenous populations and the immediate recent past of its robust, and vastly diverse, immigrant communities.

From newly emergent nations to their more established predecessors, making communities work better within multicultural frameworks is becoming a priority issue. Increased globalization of economic systems and media, as well as the enhanced mobility of people across national borders, point to a potentially new strategic role for public relations practitioners when communicating across cultures.

In Australia's state of Victoria, the "Together We Do Better" campaign offers a unique approach to promoting social connectedness, one that links better community relations with positive mental health outcomes. By partnering with an extensive network of state service agencies and local media, the "Together We Do Better" campaign aims to effect change at grassroots, programmatic levels. Launched in 1999 by Melbourne-based VicHealth, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, this campaign just entered its second phase in 2003 and is growing in reputation throughout the region as a model for building stronger communities through information and service.

## **Problem Statement**

The "Together We Do Better Campaign" launched its first phase in 1999 as the mental health promotion initiative of the multifaceted Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, or VicHealth, based in Melbourne, Australia. Established in 1987 to encourage better health for Victorians, VicHealth faced the new challenge in 1999 of how to promote good habits for mental health and wellbeing. Educating publics that mental health meant more than mental illness or disease was only part of the problem. The program's ultimate goal was developing a communications campaign that would also change the environment and create a long-lasting program. With limited resources and a program imperative to reach out to such special populations as those in rural, elderly and aboriginal communities, the "Together We Do Better" campaign had to move beyond billboards and ads to policies that improved lives and environments in measurable ways.

## **Background of the Problem and the Country**

Australia, both a continent and a country, straddles an Eastern geography adjacent to the Pacific Asian rim and a Western cultural sensibility. Credited with being the oldest continent in the world geographically, Australia was first home to Aboriginal people, who are believed to have migrated to this continent anywhere between 50,000 and 60,000 years ago. (Microsoft Encarta, Population) Remaining virtually isolated from outside cultures for centuries, Australia was the last colonial conquest of the British empire. In 1788, British Captain Arthur Phillip established the first English penal colony at Sydney Cove (now the site of the modern-day city of Sydney), thereby allowing the first permanent European community to take root. (Microsoft

Encarta, Ethnic Groups) During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, spurred by discoveries of new gold deposits on the continent and the establishment of thriving commercial centers around coastal areas, Australia, the country, developed a newly emerging sense of nationhood around a resilient group of British colonies. These colonies formed a federated government in January 1901, and today the Commonwealth of Australia comprises six states and two territories, with 91 percent of the total population concentrated in cities and urban centers. (Microsoft Encarta, Population) A “federal parliamentary democracy,” Australia has its own federal government while recognizing the British sovereign as its “head of state.” (Senevirante)

However, Australia began to forge its own unique cultural identity, fueled partly by an influx throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century of immigrants from European countries, such as Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Greece, as well as later new arrivals from Asian countries such as China, India, the Philippines and New Zealand. (Windsor) At the same time, burgeoning European settlements took a dramatic toll on the Aboriginal population, diminishing an estimated 1 million residents in 1788 to roughly 93,000 by 1901 through disease, brutality and cultural assimilation. (Feeding the Flames) A century later, one of the challenges contemporary Australia faces is the task of reconciling its colonial past and vastly diverse immigrant communities with the more ancient histories of its indigenous populations. Today, two groups comprise the descendants of the region’s original population: Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander people. (Microsoft Encarta, Ethnic Groups)

National drives for “racial reconciliation” have been integrated into Australia’s political discourse for many years, bringing focus to some of the challenges inherent in enhancing social and political equity for indigenous Australians. During the 1990s, though, many of these issues rose to new, international levels of scrutiny as Australia prepared to host the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney. Legal agreements dividing mining industry royalties and land titles between indigenous groups and Australia’s federal government came under renewed scrutiny during the mid-1990s. Fearing detrimental changes, some Aboriginal leaders began raising the possibilities of coordinating “massive protests” to coincide with the world audiences expected to celebrate the Olympic Games. (Senevirante) To counter charges that the concerns of Aboriginal populations were being ignored, the Federal government responded by announcing new policies focusing on the achievement of “equity in Aboriginal health, housing and employment,” a move that engendered some renewed skepticism and debate. (Windsor)

As the time of the prestigious games grew closer, with protests almost certain, some issues began to crystallize. Research and statistics cited in the media showed dramatic differences between Australia’s white and black citizens, highlighting increased probabilities for unemployment, higher rates of disease and illness and fewer educational opportunities within Aboriginal communities. (Feeding the Flame) By the time the Olympic Games opened in mid-September 2000, well-orchestrated marches and protests wove themselves into the patterns of international athletic competition. Against this national backdrop of racial tension, VicHealth’s local campaign to promote better mental health for all Victorians was already underway, incorporating diversity messages that showed how “social connections” and “freedom from discrimination” contributed positively to mental well being.

In 2001, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared mental health as the main theme for its “World Health Day,” putting a global spotlight upon a concern shared by many countries, from newly emergent nations to their more established predecessors. Expanding the definition of mental health beyond just mental disorders, the WHO brought into sharp focus the influences of “all aspects of the emotional, intellectual and spiritual life of a population” upon

good mental health values. (VicHealth web site) Calling attention to the “Global Burden of Disease,” WHO studies noted that fully half of 10 major “causes of disability are related to mental disorders.” (VicHealth Annual Report) But on a larger scale, this WHO focus alerted nations to the social consequences of such negative mental health issues as conflict, isolation and poverty, calling attention to the special needs of minorities, women and the elderly. Increased globalization of economic systems and media, as well as the enhanced mobility of people across more national borders, pointed to a potentially new strategic role for public relations practitioners when communicating across cultures.

In Australia’s state of Victoria, the “Together We Do Better” campaign offered a unique approach to promoting better mental health through social tolerance, one that quantitatively measured shifts in attitudes and awareness.

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, or VicHealth, was created in 1987, developed around what was then quite a revolutionary concept, according to Ms. Jackie Van Vugt, the agency’s director of communications and marketing. A statutory agency with its own Board of Governors, VicHealth was incorporated under the Tobacco Act of 1987 banning the promotion of cigarettes and related products. However, in addition to promoting better health awareness among Australia’s citizens, this agency was also designed to minimize the harmful impact of this new restrictive law on community groups, primarily in sports and arts areas, who relied heavily upon tobacco revenues for sponsorships and program support. So initially, part of the tax revenues from tobacco product sales were “dedicated” to a “buyout” arrangement that allowed VicHealth agency funds to buy longstanding sponsorship arrangements. But this arrangement has changed over the years, as more recent legal rulings determined that the collection of taxes more properly belonged under federal, not state, auspices. As a result, the sales tax revenues no longer go directly to VicHealth, but are apportioned from the federal level to the state treasury and then to the agency. But according to Van Vugt, just as the funding has become more challenging over the years, so has the agency’s mission:

In the beginning, the regional business of the agency was health promotion messages about stopping smoking, but not exclusively, and that meant messages on billboards and in ads and the like. Part of the evolution of this agency over time has been to move away from billboard advertising and sponsorship of sporting events and that part of it, to health promotion on other levels. So we’re not just about promotion of health messages. We are now looking at a whole range of activities, including the investment in research, direct intervention at the community level and work that changes the environment in measurable ways. (Van Vugt)

An example of this transition would be the agency’s funding of activities that might lead to the creation of a nonsmoking policy for members of sports clubs, as opposed to only underwriting specific sports games and competitions.

Administratively, VicHealth activities and programs are overseen by a Board of Governors of 12 to 16 members, drawn largely from government, education and business leadership. In addition, the Board extends its network of experts through five board-appointed advisory panels covering such areas a research, sports/recreation and workforce development. A chief operating officer, Dr. Rob Moodie, currently oversees the day-to-day administrative agency tasks carried out through six departments, one of which is Communications and Marketing.

VicHealth's campaign is now in its second phase and is growing in reputation throughout the region as a model for building stronger communities through information and service.

### **Goals and Objectives of the Campaign**

VicHealth's main goal is to improve the health of Victoria's population by promoting strategies for physical, mental and social wellbeing. (VicHealth web site) The "Together We Do Better" campaign focuses on strategies to improve mental health and well being; its singular message is that positive, social connections are the key to good mental health. As an analogy, VicHealth seeks to promote the prevention of mental "ill health" through the adoption of good social habits in the same way that health organizations urge the prevention of physical disease through the improvement of diet and exercise routines. And because the ultimate goal is to change behaviors and create a shift in social attitudes and behaviors, the "Together We Do Better" campaign has a long horizon ahead of it before it can claim success.

The "Together We Do Better" campaign zeroed in on three themes for its first phase (1999-2002) efforts:

- social connectedness.
- valuing diversity and ensuring freedom from discrimination and violence.
- economic participation.

These themes formed a triad of key ideas that the "Together We Do Better" campaign would emphasize in all of its three promotional activities to its key stakeholder groups:

- decision makers and opinion leaders.
- the general public.
- affected groups and individuals in their target groups.

The last stakeholder group of "targeted populations," affected groups and individuals, surfaced as a result of the agency's extensive research prior to the campaign and its evaluation of both short-term and long-term objectives. Consequently, VicHealth identified five groups as ones on whom the burden of disease and disability, among other factors, would be greatest, and to whom the agency could most successfully direct limited resources to win significant gains.

These five groups were:

1. rural communities.
2. young people.
3. older women and men.
4. Koori communities.
5. new arrivals to Australia, especially those coming from areas of ethnic conflict.

As VicHealth's communications director noted in a one-page campaign activity sheet, key messages needed to engage all of VicHealth's publics at the grassroots level. To do this, the "Together We Do Better efforts all coalesced on one central aim: "to get everyone thinking, talking and even doing something about the personal and social benefits of participation--of belonging to a community and of being accepted, respected and included." (Van Vugt)

From this general goal, the campaign identified four objectives for each program activity, promotion message and ad:



1. Encourage discussion on community participation and the community's capacity and responsibility to facilitate it on all levels.
2. Increase general understanding of the benefits of participation.
3. Examine existing disincentives to participation -- including individual, organization and structural contexts-- and then model solutions.
4. Broaden and strengthen collaboration between organizations and individuals to promote and advocate improved participation.

In stage one of VicHealth's strategic planning for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the agency fundamentally changed the way it approached health promotion, shifting its emphasis to creating, sustaining and supporting a statewide network of organizations throughout the state which could become the sites for implementing the campaign's messages. Outreach to VicHealth's alliance of programs and funded projects created a natural base: whether the organizations were targeting sports, arts, health or education as their primary mission, all were invited to promote the key message that positive involvement led to mentally healthy outcomes. Then, the communication and marketing team provided ads and news release templates and encouraged member organizations to proactively share their successes with their area media. Also, the team planned launch or special events in various areas of the state to help draw media attention to activities. A slide presentation reiterating the reasons for the campaign and incorporating its key messages was useful in helping spread the "Together We Do Better" message to forums, conferences, meetings and similar events.

By making the strong connection, supported by research, that improving social contexts can enhance mental and physical health, the "Together We Do Better" campaign offered tangible ways that people could overcome fears and prejudices and improve their communities. Ultimately, after repeated years of exposure to VicHealth's new messages and programs, campaign planners expect that the success of the "Together We Do Better" campaign would be reflected in lower costs for treatment of such mental health-related conditions as depression, and in a decreased level of reported violence against its targeted populations.

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

VicHealth's "Together We Do Better" campaign is a media-rich, multi-platform effort. Strategic tactics focus on promoting messages and creating policies for change through partnerships established between VicHealth and local agencies and community groups throughout the state.

In its 2001-02 annual report, VicHealth reported a total funding budget of \$21,115,982, representing an investment in 461 projects and underwriting of activities for 366 sporting clubs. (VicHealth Annual Report) Since the "Together We Do Better" campaign crosses many of the agency's program areas, a separate campaign budget is difficult to determine. However, VicHealth reported investing 18.06 percent of total grants funds into promoting mental health and wellbeing, the program area under which the "Together We Do Better" campaign falls, noting that this was the "third highest investment" the agency made, behind tobacco control and physical activity. (VicHealth Annual Report) Another measure of the campaign's resources is to look at staff assigned directly to promotional activities for the agency. Besides the director, the communications and marketing team has only three other members: coordinators of media, events and publications.

Extensive research, including literature reviews of dominant trends in mental health and health promotion and regional population surveys, provided strong, theoretical bases for the agency's ensuing campaign. For example, an early project two years after the official start of the "Together We Do Better" campaign was a VicHealth-funded survey of Victorians' attitudes to bullying. Using a combination of telephone surveys and depth interviews, the study polled Victorians about their ideas about bullying, and their experiences with these behaviors. As a result, the agency discovered that while the bullying experience was widespread--nine out of 10 respondents reported experiencing bullying to some degree--the vast majority of those polled did not believe bullying had a place in society. VicHealth recognized this as an opportunity to create messages about how communities could minimize bullying and illustrate the connections between bullying and ill health outcomes, such as stress, anger, intimidation and even violence. The wide release of the study's results to media throughout the state generated publicity about both the topic of "bullying" and the VicHealth mission.

VicHealth's communication and marketing team set a broad agenda and developed the key messages that would guide the statewide initiative. Techniques included print ads, billboards, news articles, radio and TV public service announcements, annual reports and a dedicated web site.

In one series of print ads and billboards, the message begins with a question that challenges the readers to engage with others while challenging their own potentials. One ad, for example, asks "Can I learn an alien language?" Accompanying a picture of an older man and younger boys involved in a conversation is copy that targets the key messages of empowerment, belonging and well being:

With a shared purpose our differences shrink away.  
And the thrill of achieving something together is just  
the start of the story. Taking part with others, or making  
Someone else welcome, is the best medicine on earth.  
It's the one language every body understands.

Finally, at the bottom of the ad, the campaign's signature tag line, "Together We Do Better," appears in a prominent type font, followed by a "call-to-action" inviting participation and providing the address for the campaign's web site. Similarly, a series of 30 second radio ads focuses on latent barriers prohibiting involvement such as a fear of taking risks or of potential embarrassment. After a quick acknowledgement of the challenge, the announcer informs listeners that positive social networks yield positive health benefits. As with the print materials, the broadcast messages invite listeners to get involved by going to the campaign's web site.

An important element in the campaign materials is the web site dedicated to the "Together We Do Better" effort, which is prominently linked to the VicHealth home page. With the campaign site, viewers get to see again in succession the same images that are featured in its public service advertising. Additionally, a "connections" link offers names and contacts for specific clubs, organizations and centers where individuals can get involved, while the "case studies" link provides profiles of successful programs in the state. Though integral to its efforts now, the web site was a bit of an afterthought, created after the campaign started when staff became deluged with calls and inquiries as media coverage grew.

## Results Achieved

VicHealth completed the first stage of the “Together We Do Better” campaign in 2002. The campaign’s success was measured by two general indicators: state program activity and assessment of the broader awareness of the VicHealth program. The campaign measured its local and state impact by tracking publicity hits about campaign messages and programs and through awareness surveys of targeted publics. Successful cases were highlighted on VicHealth’s web site and in annual reports, and the agency’s annual awards program honoring “outstanding achievements in health promotion” each December allows it to single out stellar programs. With its small staff, the agency has devised an inventive way to keep information flowing about what programs in mental health and well being are taking hold, and which ones need more encouragement. Four times a year, VicHealth’s funded partner organizations throughout the state are invited to its headquarters in Melbourne for program “show and tell” sessions that allow them to share their successes. At that same time, the agency’s marketing and communication staff offers media training sessions, encouraging more reaching out to local media.

From 1999 through 2001, the “Together We Do Better” campaign reported funding 28 activities, including research that targeted its key publics.

Funded activities included a women’s circus, a recreation program for multicultural youth, an indoor walking group targeting older people and a Koori leadership and enterprise learning project.

The “Together We Do Better” campaign is gaining a reputation as a model for other regions interested in starting or improving a broad-based approach to promoting mental health and well being. VicHealth Director Dr. Rob Moodie attended the 2002 International Network of Health Promotion Foundations in Bangkok, Thailand, facilitating that country’s recent establishment of a health promotion foundation based upon the VicHealth model. Melbourne was also chosen as the site for the 2004 World Health Promotion Conference

The second stage of the campaign, launched in 2003, is shaped by a planning document, “Strategic Directions 2003-2006,” that outlines four more years of activities and programs. Building upon its past success, the agency has identified goals and objectives for the second three years of its initiatives. These include:

- Increase the evidence base for promoting mental health.

- Develop the skill base and resources of communities, organizations and individuals to sustain mental health promotion activity.

- Consolidate mental health promotion within policies across a range of sectors.

- Increase the broader community understanding of the importance of obtaining and maintaining mental health (VicHealth Strategic Directions).

## Conclusion

“Together We Do Better” is a successful campaign that offers a good model for public relations practitioners working in any arena who want to partner with local community agencies and use innovative methods to quantify increased awareness and improved attitudes. Research about the practice of public relations in Australia is limited, but one study (Singh and Smyth) outlines a key challenge facing the profession in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the need to position the practice

as a “strategic” instead of a “support” function. The VicHealth campaign can be seen as part of the leading edge in the emergence of strategic public relations practice in Australia.

Mental health and wellbeing will loom as a major issue for both emerging countries and more established societies, although the challenges are unique for each. Poverty and lack of economic opportunity for citizens negatively affect access to healthcare of all kinds. (Walsh and Johnson, Tsey, Whiteside, Deemal and Gibson) At the same time, research strongly suggests that well-developed societies are no better off in fostering good mental health (McNatt), as increased levels of stress and depression are seen as factors diminishing the economic advantages of wealthy nations.

At the same time that mental health wellness is gaining more prominence as a top issue, the field of health promotion continues to refine its techniques. Practitioners balance the need for information about disease with a renewed imperative to aggressively promote prevention strategies. (Cole and Wyn, Cahill, Holdsworth, Rowling, and Carson)

As information sources increase, so do the opportunities to communicate information effectively to publics from all backgrounds. Diversity approaches and tactics that speak to multicultural audiences in their own contexts can be made part of campaigns (Carstarphen and Wells), and there are successful health promotion strategies targeted at hard-to-access populations. (Fine and Demakis, Clarke, and Walsh and Johnson) However, VicHealth’s “Together We Do Better” campaign has pioneered the work that many organizations are still learning how to do. Chief among innovations in health promotion is its commitment to redefine the message about mental health issues to include an emphasis on preventive strategies and wellness goals. Another important component is the agency’s recognition that while targeted approaches to special populations are important, the key message about social connectedness must include majority audiences as well, so that they will support the messages about inclusion in meaningful ways.

From newly emergent nations to their more established predecessors, making communities work better culturally within diverse frameworks is becoming a priority issue. (Chua, Wel and Tilburg) VicHealth’s “Together We Do Better Campaign” offers a model for improved relations in all communities through the promotion of better mental health empowerment strategies.

## **TEACHING NOTE**

### **Purpose of the Case Study**

1. to give students an understanding of a comprehensive promotional campaign run by a nonprofit agency, particularly highlighting a situation where programming efforts must work in concert with local, national and international governing bodies
2. to invite students to consider the impact of targeted messages promoting social connectedness upon communities
3. to highlight innovative accomplishments in mental health promotion, where the message has expanded from disease and treatment, to lifestyle modification and proactive intervention
4. to encourage students to consider more strategically how messages can be communicated to diverse publics within large communities

### **Suggestions for Teaching the Case in Class Sessions**

In a session prior to their review of this case, students should have an opportunity to consider the differences between disseminating health information about a disease or crisis and information about health and wellbeing. Engage students in a discussion about a current medical health issue/crisis that may be in the news, such as the SARS epidemic, mad cow disease, flu outbreaks and so on. Next, invite them, once they've identified with a crisis topic, to discuss what kind of messages they would create for their publics if they were in charge of the public relations campaign. Some responses should include information and facts about the seriousness of the crisis, steps to take if concerned and availability of treatments.

Next, invite the students to apply the same process to preventing a physical condition, such as obesity. What messages would they create, and how would these differ from their "crisis" messages? Some responses might point out that while the issue may be important, it would be hard to communicate the same level of urgency with this. Also, they may bring up the role of positive, encouraging messages that can encourage people to change lifestyles. At the same time, they should be able to consider how much more challenging it would be to point the public to specific, not-for-profit solutions on a grassroots level.

Finally, for both of these hypothetical campaigns, they should be encouraged to discuss the following:

- media that would be best suited for reaching their publics
- special challenges involved in identifying and reaching minority publics

Prior to the next class session, encourage students to do their own research about mental health issues. A prime source would be the World Health Organization's web site, or some of the articles listed in the bibliography for this case. The goal would be to get students to become conversant with some definitions and concepts about mental health and wellbeing, as well as with what researchers have discovered are the contributing factors to mental "ill health."

In class, invite students to share their findings and information so that the class has a common body of knowledge about the subject. Then, in teams, invite them to link what they've learned about potential cause of mental "ill health" to possible at-risk populations on their campus. They should be encouraged to think about targeted populations that fit their contexts, as VicHealth has done. Some possibilities might include:

- Ethnic minorities, particularly if there have been recent tensions
- Gender groups who might be isolated (such as homosexual)
- Returning students who might feel "disconnected" from their younger classmates
- First time students from small communities who might be facing new challenges away from home
- Commuter students

Finally, invite the groups to summarize their ideas and suggest specific tactics. Encourage them to come up with actual "tag-lines" along with suggestions about specific media they would use. What kind of communications plan would they develop?

## Questions for Discussion of the Case

Students should be able to place the challenges faced by the “Together We Do Better” campaign in a localized context, suggesting reasons why this effort could have relevance to all kinds of communities. To sum up, a few suggestion questions can help them crystallize their understanding of the issues and the case.

1. What are the critical issues addressed in this case?
2. Who are the main stakeholders and why?
3. Why did “targeted populations” have to become central to the success of the overall campaign?
4. What were the key messages?
5. How were various media used and why?
6. What is the difference between promoting health issues versus promoting health initiatives? How does this distinction relate to the work VicHealth has done?

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**Anne Cooper Chen  
Ohio University  
United States**

**Teck-hua Ngu  
Institut Teknologi MARA  
Malaysia**

**Abdul Halim b. Taib  
Bernama News Agency  
Malaysia**

Made possible by generous grants from  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

Vision 2020 is the umbrella name for a government economic plan, announced in 1991, that aims to bring Malaysia into the club of developed nations within 30 years. It has two main publics: domestic citizens and overseas business elites.

Vision 2020's centerpiece for enhancing economic development, the Multimedia Super Corridor, a 15-by-50-kilometer model sector, stretches from Kuala Lumpur to the new international airport at Sepang. It features state-of-the-art communications systems and tax-free operations.

Tactics to reach the domestic public with a positive economic development message include stories and PSAs in Malaysia's controlled news media. Overseas, Prime Minister Mahathir and Information Minister Rahmat often serve as 2020 spokesmen. Internet sites are used in addition to personal channels. The government cannot order or guarantee favorable foreign coverage, but news pegs such as building the world's tallest building put the small nation (population: 19 million) on the world's agenda.

Problems confounding the goal of full development by 2020 include the region's fiscal crisis that began in 1997 and uneven prosperity within Malaysia's Malay-Chinese-Indian population. Seven years into the campaign, domestic awareness is so high that even street vendors use the 2020 catchphrase to name their shops. Internationally, numerous companies, especially from Japan and the United States, have begun to construct manufacturing plants in the corridor. A Harvard assessment calls the development goal well within sight.

## **The Problem**

"Why are you still wearing the mask?" asks a Malaysian cartoon character. "The haze is gone." Replies his companion: "My denture is under repair... I cannot show the world my missing front teeth" (Sofiyen 1997).

Unfortunately for Malaysia, the dissipation of the haze from Indonesian fires got much less press than the haze itself. Thus the government mounted a campaign in December 1997--"All clear in Malaysia"--aimed at letting potential foreign tourists know that breathing the air in Malaysia was no longer hazardous to their health.

Government-inspired campaigns characterized the beginnings of and still account for much of the current public relations activity in Malaysia. The short history of that activity began in 1945 when the British established the Department of Publicity and Printing to counter the appeal of Communism (Morais and Adnan, 1996). After independence, the government concentrated on "nation building" (Van Leuven 1996, p. 210) with such campaigns as combating malaria and promoting racial harmony.

As development proceeded, “practices attendant to the market development phase” became superimposed on those of the nation building phase (Van Leuven 1996, p. 221). Even today, with private agencies well established, “almost every major (public relations) consultancy in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur derives 20-30 percent of its income from one of the various government ministries” (Van Leuven 1996, p. 213).

Government campaigns, formerly directed only at domestic audiences, now sometimes have an overseas public, such as “All clear in Malaysia.”

The topic of this case study--a campaign aimed at getting Malaysia into the “club” of fully developed nations by the year 202 -- has two main publics: Malaysian citizens and overseas elites. Based on past performance, Malaysia has the opportunity to achieve its goal.

The confidence and good will of foreign countries have been crucial to Malaysia’s rising fortunes. The young nation, which has attracted numerous electronics plants from overseas, is turning from an extractive to a manufacturing-based economy and experiencing an 8 percent annual growth rate.

Malaysia has the right natural advantages and has pursued the right policies, according to Radelet, Sachs and Lee (1997). Four factors, on which Malaysia ranks generally high, have been shown to correlate with development:

- 1) initial conditions (e.g., low starting income, high education);
- 2) natural resources and geography (e.g., access to the sea, a long coastline, non-extractive economic base);
- 3) government policy (e.g., openness to international trade, low risk of expropriation, strong rule of law);
- 4) demographics (e.g., high life expectancy, large working-age population).

In a paper written before the Asian currency crisis, Radelet, Sachs and Lee (1997, p. 59) concluded, “Malaysia’s expected rapid growth, albeit perhaps slightly lower than in the past, will bring its income from its current level of 37 percent of U.S. income to about 70 percent in 2025.”

Sachs, director of the Harvard Institute for International Development, gave a speech in Malaysia titled “Asia in the Year 2020” after the downturn, which he called “a crisis of financial markets and not the whole system” (“Don: Malaysia.. .” 1997). But Malaysians see friends lose their jobs, accept half pay and (in the government) experience a wage freeze (personal communication 12/21/97). The master’s degree program in which the first author taught in 1996,

financed by a Malaysian university, was cancelled in November 1997, a further sign of economic decline.

In addition to the severe 1997-98 economic downturn, serious ethnic divisions loom as a problem. Ethnically, Malaysia's three subgroups -- Malays, Chinese and Indians -- exist in a delicate balance that sometimes explodes (see "Brief History of Malaysia"). The affirmative action policies favoring Malays (called Bumiputras: literally, "sons of the soil") have drawn much criticism from the foreign media and the non-Bumiputra community in Malaysia. For example, the institution where the authors teach, taught or studied is an affirmative action university; only Muslim students may attend. Professors represent varied ethnicities and religions, but Malays usually hold most of the deanships and higher offices.

The golden opportunity of the Vision 2020 campaign, now beset by new economic problems, requires persuasion and confidence building to succeed. When the campaign began in 1991, it had seemed just a matter of getting out the word.

## **Background**

On February 28, 1991, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's prime minister, gave a speech to the inaugural meeting of the Malaysian Business Council entitled "Malaysia: The way forward." What Mahathir said was "quite ordinary and something we would have expected in any political speech, especially that of a prime minister" (Shamsul 1992, p. 1). But the unexpected results have changed the country.

The Malaysian Business Council, a virtual Who's Who of Malaysia, includes top civil servants, politicians, academics and the captains of Malaysian industry. The group of advisors who wrote the speech had "to discover something to replace the NEP [see "Brief History of Malaysia"] after 1990. The National Economic Consultative Council (NECC) had failed to come up with anything useful and thus the duty fell on Mahathir to deliver." (Shamsul 1992, p. 11)

The addition of the word "vision" by local media (Shamsul 1992) derives from the coincidence of Mahathir's target date for development with a familiar concept from optical science. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, 20/20 vision means "normal visual ability, i.e., seeing clearly at 20 feet what the normal eye sees at 20 feet." Since the distant goal of full development requires Malaysians to look into the future, the term "vision" fit perfectly. The government thereafter used "Vision 2020" as an umbrella concept for its development plans.

The domestic media's role in coining the phrase was only the beginning of its role in selling the concept. While Malaysia's Ministry of Information can only attempt to reach and influence the campaign's overseas audience, it directly sets the agenda for the domestic audience.

The majority of the media in Malaysia are either directly owned by the government--such as Radio-Television Malaysia (RTM), which operates two of the existing three nationally televised television channels (TV 1 and TV 2) and all but two of the radio stations in the country--or indirectly owned by the political parties in power through their corporations.

In Malaysia, media usually “accept, if not embellish, news releases pertaining to government campaigns” (Van Leuven 1996, p. 211). But to think of Malaysia’s media as “mail carriers” for the Ministry of Information or other ministries would oversimplify the situation. Individual media assume a “cultural interpreter” role for the government, crucial “in a single country that must work in an environment with diverse groups” (Grunig et al. 1995, p. 183).

Reflecting Malaysia’s multiracial, multicultural and multiethnic makeup, the mass media in Malaysia are also diverse and varied, with specific media catering to the needs of particular ethnic groups. The country’s 37 daily newspapers include titles in Malay, English, Mandarin Chinese and Tamil, for example. Fearing that the mass media could exploit delicate racial sensitivities, the government has instituted strict regulations.

Malaysia’s media, rated “not free” by Freedom House, play a role quite different in government campaigns than media rated “free” (AI-Enad 1990). Freedom House gives Malaysia the following marks for 1996:

	laws/reg	polit.controls	econ.factors	repression	TOTAL
b’cast	9	9	0	8	
print	9	0	0	16	61

Note: all dimensions rank 0-10 except repression, at 0-20. Totals are rated 0-30 free; 31-60 partly free; 61-100 not free.

The public to which the domestic media communicate represent the following seven major groupings, according to a study conducted by Survey Research Malaysia (SRM) in 1990 (Hashim 1994):

1. THE RURAL TRADITIONALIST (32 percent): ethnic Malays who stay in rural villages. They are also largely conservative and traditional in outlook.
2. THE KAMPUNG [VILLAGE] TRENDSEUERS (16 percent): about 60 percent of this group are ethnic Malays. However, they are from a younger age group and are largely rural dwellers. Unlike the Rural Traditionalists, they are ambitious, outgoing and brand and fashion conscious, but are also family and community oriented.
3. THE REBEL HANGOUTS (16 percent): mainly young, urban ethnic Chinese with high personal incomes. They are nonconformists and the least religious and moralistic of the groups.
4. THE SLEEPWALKERS (12 percent): mainly ethnic Chinese females over 40 years of age. Pessimistic and the least houseproud. They are also not very family or community oriented.

5. THE NOT QUITE THERES (10 percent): largely young ethnic Malays with good personal incomes. Moralistic, but introverted and lacking in confidence.

6. THE INCONSPICUOUS (10 percent): urban female ethnic Malays with average income. Moralistic, introverted and lacking in confidence, but with high optimism.

7. THE UPPER ECHELONS (5 percent): urban ethnic Malays in the high-income bracket. Socially active, ambitious, confident and perceive of themselves as leaders. Similar to most ethnic Malays, they are family oriented, moralistic and nationalistic.

## **Goals and Objectives**

In his 1991 speech, Mahathir (1991, p. 2) called for full development “in our mould,” not merely following in the path of the already developed, mostly Western countries. Mahathir (1991, p. 2) further envisioned a development beyond mere economics, a Malaysia that is: fully developed along all the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally. We must be fully developed in term of national unity and social justice, political stability, system of government, quality of life social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence.

Mahathir and his advisors set a target of doubling Malaysia’s GDP every 10 years between 1990 and 2020, from RM (Ringgit Malaysian) 115 billion in 1990 to RM920 billion in 2020. The target would require average annual GDP growth of 4 percent for the next 30 years.

Some of the goals enabling Malaysia to reach the target include the establishment of a competitive economy, promotion of small- and medium-scale industries, encouragement of foreign direct investment, development of human resources and relying on the private sector as the primary engine of growth.

In elaborating on the last goal, Shamsul (1992 p. 9) says that Mahathir “introduced the concept of MALAYSIA INC. with clear corporatist overtones, and reemphasized the fact that the traditional role of the government is to serve private capitalist interests. There is a touch of Japan Inc. in this policy.”

As the program has evolved over the past six years, other goals were articulated, especially by Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rabmat. Over all, he said, stands the philosophy “that we will accept what is good from outside and reject what is bad. So basically, what we want to do is to develop ‘self-censorship’ within our population” (“Malaysia’s MSC...” 1997). Goals include:

- \*teaching the people to use multimedia intelligently;
- \*creating an awareness of the importance of information technology; and

\*protecting indigenous values, which has the effect of disavowing pornography.

Sometimes coordination of goals has been a problem, such as when Mahathir's personal views conflicted with those of other planners. For instance, at the World Bank! International Monetary Fund meeting in Hong Kong Sept. 20, 1997, Mahathir personally blamed multimillionaire philanthropist George Soros, a Hungarian-born citizen of the United States, for creating the Asian fiscal crisis. Vision 2020 policy, however, has a goal of attracting overseas investment. Thus a few days later, Malaysian finance minister Anwar Ibrahim "tried to assuage investors, saying that Malaysia has no intention of implementing regulations like those proposed by his boss" (Switow 1997).

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

In his 1991 speech, Mahathir (1991, p. 1) consciously chose the 2020 time frame to represent the year when the children of today's young parents would reach maturity: Hopefully, the Malaysian who is born today and in the years to come will be the last generation of our citizens who will be living in a country that is called 'developing.'

A "generation plus" worked out as  $1991 + 252016 + 4 = 2020$ , a time frame that enables today's young parents to envision their grandchildren in a brave, new Malaysian world.

Based on experience with the NEP (see "Brief History of Malaysia"), a 20-year policy, this alternative to the NEP will have a life 10 years longer. It will clearly take longer than 20 years to create a group of Malay entrepreneurs. The NEP had not by 1990 enabled Bumiputra ownership of the country's equity to equal 30 percent. So the revised goal aims at a higher percent over more years.

The Vision 2020 centerpiece is the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC), a 9-by-30-mile (about 15 km by 50 km) zone that will stretch from the capital, Kuala Lumpur, to the new international airport at Sepang. Starting in March 1997, overseas high-tech firms could apply for MSC status.

The following tactics, set forth in the MSC Bill of Guarantees, are designed to attract foreign high-tech IT companies (Langenfeld 1997):

- \*wiring with state-of-the-art telecommunications systems;
- \*restricted employment of knowledge workers;
- \* exemption from local ownership requirements;
- \*tax...free operation for up to 10 years; and
- \*no censorship of the Internet.

The last was an about-face for a country with a "not free" press.

Mahathir himself often makes the key MSC-related announcements and, to personally woo investors, often makes overseas trips, including to the Silicon Valley of California and Tokyo. Once given MSC status, corporations themselves, like Japan's Nippon Telephone and Telegraph, take on MSC promotional roles. Other stakeholders include the Selangor state government, landowners in the corridor and all related government departments.

Other planned components of Vision 2020 include a paperless national government in a new location at Putrajaya and "smart schools" linked by the Internet. Possibly the most ambitious project is Malacca's Multimedia University, the first private university in Malaysia, which started taking students in October 1997. Some will learn on site, while others will join by distance learning. Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology helped design the academic programs.

The government also has brought people into its fold by creating various boards, each of which has designated spokespersons. Members of the Multimedia Development Corporation coordinate all activities in the corridor. The 30 members of the International Advisory Panel include personnel from Microsoft, IBM, Apple and Taiwan's Acer computer firm.

Naturally, a high tech project will make use of electronic channels to deliver its message, both to potential investors and the merely curious. A link from "Malaysia" on Yahoo, for example, explains a service for businesses called Borderless Marketing that will "create and deliver marketing messages, customer services and information products to their multicultural and multinational customers." The message comes from Tan Sri Dato Dr. Othman Yeop Abdullah, executive chairman, Multimedia Development Corporation.

The worldwide audience that uses traditional media knows mostly about the bricks-and-mortar components of Vision 2020, designed to create built-in news pegs. At 1,483 feet, the twin Petronas Towers, new home of Malaysia's oil monopoly, have taken "tallest building" bragging rights away from Chicago's Sears Tower. Still in the planning stage, Linear City is billed as the world's longest building.

Journalists can't ignore stories like these. Thus by consciously beating a record for height or length, Malaysia reaches readers worldwide. But while superlatives gain Malaysia a place on the international agenda, the Ministry of Information cannot control the tone of international stories as it can control domestic ones.

Domestically, the media constantly carry good news of progress. In addition, trailers of Vision 2020 air frequently during prime-time television slots. Other media, such as billboards



highlighting the campaign, sprang up like mushrooms after the rain shortly following Mahathir's 1991 speech.

However, international coverage lacks fawning (or suitably respectful, by Malay standards) attention toward high officials, such as a Christian Science Monitor piece that began (Switow 1997): If Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir had his way, international financier George Soros would be out of a job and possibly behind bars.

Even a piece on the Petronas Towers and Linear City contains words like "grandiose," "colossal," "building spree" and "megaprojects" not meant as compliments ("Malaysia thinking.. ." 1996).

## **Results Achieved**

Vision 2020 clearly has brought Malaysia mixed results. The Malaysian government decided to focus on the Multimedia Super Corridor, a small, clearly defined geographical area, to symbolize Vision 2020 first, before introducing the multimedia environment to the whole country. Six years into the Vision 2020 campaign, how have the two key publics, domestic and overseas, reacted?

Domestic awareness has been phenomenal, while acceptance has been positive with reservations. The terms "Wawasan 2020" and "Vision 2020" have "achieved a magical mantra status in present day Malaysian social life" (Shamsul 1992, p. 2). Popping up constantly in conversations, the terms have such positive associations that entrepreneurs, according to (Shamsul 1992, p. 2), have even adopted this term for marketing purposes. Hence we could now go to a "Vision 2020 Unisex Salon for a hairdo, or "2020 Entertainment Center" for a game of snooker or "Tom Yam 2020" stall if we are hungry, and for those with poor vision, there is a "Syarikat Cermin Mata 2020" in almost every major town in Malaysia today.

Malaysians' consumer confidence in the second quarter of 1996 was far and away at the top, 93.4 of 100, of 12 Asian-Pacific nations, according to a survey by MasterCard International. Measuring employment, the economy, income, the stock market and quality of life, the 93.4 self-report for Malaysia contrasted with Japan's rating of 35.0. However, the survey was taken before the currency crisis of summer-fall 1997.

Recent anecdotal evidence shows some misgivings (personal communications to third author). A teacher, for example, flatly declares that the government should defer the MSC, especially now when the country's economy is floundering.

"One needs to have a healthy mind and healthy body to think intelligently," he says. "There are still thousands of people, especially in rural areas, the farmers, rubber tappers,

fishermen, laborers who are still lacking the basic necessities. At this stage, they do not need a computer in their house, nor do they want to know about MSC or the Silicon Valley; they need a steady income to bring up their children, educate them and then direct them to the information age.”

“At this time when the Malaysian currency is depreciating, and the economy is somewhat unstable,” agrees a computer programmer, “there’s no way that construction work on the MSC should be carried out as scheduled, although the government has not deferred the project.”

An auxiliary positive result of Vision 2020 for the domestic public is the decision to allow free information flow on the Internet.

Any Malaysians with Internet access can help themselves to uncensored news. In mid-1997, the Information Ministry further decided to rescind the law that requires foreign news agencies to distribute their news through BERNAMA, the national agency (“Malaysian news..” 1997). Foreign agencies may now channel news directly to subscribers. These moves may eventually lift Malaysia’s domestic media out of its current “not free” status.

Malaysia’s neighbor Singapore still regulates Internet flow, and yet continues to attract business interest. With only three service providers, all licensed, the small city-state can easily control communication. Yet it accommodates more than 4,000 foreign companies, including 1,200 American multinationals. In a recent survey of over 6,000 top executives in Asia by the Far Eastern Economic Review, 42 percent chose Singapore over other Asian countries as the preferred base for their regional operations.

The domestic Malaysian public, which lags behind Singapore in information technology, cannot make full use of its access rights. An index that measures the basic tools of international telephones, computing power and faxes puts Malaysia 25th of 45 nations, with a 3.496 index (“Asia ranks...” 1997). Singapore ranks 4.818, the highest score for any Asian nation other than Japan. (The United States first-place score is 6.689.) Vision 2020 has to date brought Internet technology to only about 2% of its domestic public.

Results regarding Vision 2020’s overseas public can be measured in terms of commitments to locate businesses in the Multimedia Super Corridor. Hundreds have expressed interest, while to date some, including NH of Japan, have made firm commitments. Based on the assessment of Harvard economist Jeffrey Sach in November 1997, after the currency crisis, Malaysia’s projected growth of 4% a year should result in “a fulfillment of Vision 2020” (“Don: Malaysia. . .” 1997). An assessment of Vision 2020 in 2005 will bring the story up to date.

### **BRIEF HISTORY OF MALAYSIA**

*Located where sea routes linked the markets of India and China, Malaysia experienced multicultural influences from its earliest history. In the late 1200s, Muslim traders from India*

brought Islam to the archipelago. Next came the Portuguese, who in 1511 conquered the trading town of Malacca. Subsequently the Dutch laid siege to and won (in 1641) the port, which the British in turn took over in 1795. Japanese forces invaded in 1941, but the British returned after the war. The British practiced the “divide and rule” method of governance in Malaya. The Malays were kept at their traditional way of life at their villages; the Indians were recruited for the plantations and civil service; and the Chinese were mainly recruited to work the tin mines. Even today occupational divisions persist among the races. When Britain gave Malaya (the peninsula) its independence in 1957, the economy was based on extractive and agricultural industries, such as palm oil production. British firms owned large rubber plantations and tin mining companies, making Malaya the world’s largest exporter of rubber and tin. Malaysia as a nation was formed in 1963 when Malaya and the British Borneo states of Sabah and Sarawak as well as Singapore, formed a federation. Singapore left the union in 1965. Today the city-state still has intimate economic ties with its neighbor. Despite various development plans, in the late 1960s, the Chinese and Indians still had higher income levels than Malays. The disparities were exploited during the 1969 election, sparking off racial riots that saw several hundred people killed. As a result, the government introduced the New Economic Policy in 1970 to address this imbalance.

It was aimed at giving the Bumiputras (Malays and indigenous tribes) a chance to catch up and own at least 30% of the economy. In 1981, Dato’ Sen Mahathir Mohamad, a medical doctor by training, took office as Malaysia’s fourth prime minister, a position he still holds.

#### MALAYSIA AT A GLANCE

##### Population

18,410,000 (1992 est.)

**Malay 59%**

Chinese 32%

Indian 9%

Literacy 80%

GDP/capita \$2,670 (1991)

Life expectancy (years)

male- 66female-71

##### Geography/Politics

area: 127,316 sq. mi. SE tip of Asia, plus N coast  
Borneo, 13 states, 2 federal territories

govt: federal parliamentary democracy  
(constitutional monarch elected by council of  
sultans every 5 years)

capital: Kuala Lumpur (pop. 1 million)

*The authors would like to thank Zainab Nordin of the Institute for Strategic and Advanced Studies, Kuala Lumpur Mohd Fadzli Ali of University Technology Malaysia, and Dr. Charles Chen, Ohio University, for their assistance.*

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**Sewing Up a Torn Image: Hill & Knowlton Responds  
to a Crisis in the Garment Industry**

**Emma L. Daugherty  
California State University, Long Beach  
United States**

Made possible by generous grants from  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education

University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400

Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

Responding to allegations made on “Hard Copy,” a tabloid news show on U.S. television, a Taiwanese garment manufacturer turned to Hill & Knowlton’s international division to help solve a big problem--false accusations and the possible loss of key accounts. The television show claimed that companies in Nicaragua’s free trade zone were abusing and harming workers. Major U.S. clothing buyers responded quickly by asking the garment maker to provide volumes of information about its own treatment of workers. The company’s owner wanted and needed public relations help to ensure social responsibility and the retention of clients. Otherwise, jobs would be lost and the company might suffer unrecoverable losses.

Hill & Knowlton needed to explore the situation to ensure that the Taiwanese garment manufacturer was indeed conducting business in a socially responsible way. Not only did Hill & Knowlton determine that the company did not abuse or harm employees, but it learned that the garment manufacturer was dealing with political forces in a volatile environment.

The agency in a five-day period reacted quickly by assessing the situation, establishing goals and objectives, defining key publics and making recommendations that were implemented. All its objectives were achieved.

## **The Problem**

“Hard Copy,” a tabloid television show with wide viewership in the United States, aired a story that ran for three days from Nov. 11 to Nov. 13, 1997. The investigative team from “Hard Copy,” working with an activist group called the National Labor Committee, made a series of damaging allegations against the companies in Nicaragua’s state-owned Las Mercedes Free Trade Zone. Some of the charges included underpaying workers, employing children and forcing employees to work up to 13 hours a day, seven days a week. The broadcast also claimed that workers were not paid for overtime; were verbally, physically, and sexually abused by supervisors and managers; were exposed to dangerous chemicals; and were housed in deplorable conditions.

The report also said that solvents, dyes and bleach were allowed to drain freely into open areas and containment barrels were allowed to rust. “Hard Copy” depicted the free trade zone as an area resembling a prison with electrical fences and armed guards. The broadcast recommended that viewers avoid purchasing goods or products manufactured in Nicaragua and urged them to write their elected representatives to oppose department stores that might buy goods from Nicaragua.

The “Hard Copy” reports generated immediate media coverage by other U.S. news organizations, particularly in the Hispanic community. Two of the largest television stations in

the Los Angeles market that target Latinos, KMEX and KVEA, ran stories about the alleged working conditions in the Nicaraguan free trade zone.

This issue had first surfaced about a year earlier when Witness for Peace, a religious group based in Washington, D.C., sponsored an eight-city U.S. tour of six Nicaraguan apparel workers to publicize their working conditions. In an Oct. 7, 1996 article in *Women's Wear Daily*, Cesar Zamora, a commercial counselor with the Nicaraguan Embassy in Washington, is quoted as saying, "We have had problems with the Taiwanese."

In 1997, the apparel industry came under a much-publicized attack when Charles Kernaghan, president of the National Labor Committee, accused WalMart Stores, Inc. of using low-paid Honduran workers to produce the Kathie Lee Gifford clothing line. (The National Labor Committee appears to be an advocacy group promoting the interests of labor in the United States. Its board of directors is comprised mostly of clergy, academics and U.S. labor representatives, including individuals from the AFL-CIO and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial & Textile Employees.

## **Background**

After more than a decade of civil conflict and state control of its economy, Nicaragua now is free from Communist rule. The country is no longer under the influence of Cuba, the U.S.S.R. and former President Daniel Ortega. In 1990, the first democratic president, Violetta Chamorro, was elected. Her administration was business driven and realized Nicaragua's limited production capabilities. As leader of one of the most impoverished countries in the world, she developed economic policies to revitalize the country by calling for foreign investors. Hence, the government re-designated a region south of the capital, Managua, as a free trade zone where companies could produce and export goods. Other countries, such as Korea and Mexico, have done the same in an effort to stimulate their own economies.

Back in 1976, the Las Mercedes Free Trade Zone in Nicaragua was first opened with eight companies and 3,000 employees. The Sandiistas shut down the free trade zone in 1979, converting it into a prison where inmates produced boots under the Pronto brand name until 1989. In 1991, President Chamorro reopened the free trade zone in an attempt to stimulate the stagnant economy. The government invited investors to establish businesses in the free trade zone. Investors were given special considerations, including tax breaks and 100 percent foreign ownership of plants in Nicaragua. NicaNews, a Nicaraguan newspaper, quoted Gilberto Wong, manager of the free trade zone, as saying, "the move attracted foreign investment and created employment opportunities for work-starved Nicaraguans" (Nov. 17-30, 1997; p. 6). Seventeen entrepreneurs from Taiwan, Canada, Italy and the United States set up their companies in the free trade zone, totaling over \$50 million in investments. Most represented the garment industry and generated about 18,000 jobs. The firms supply clothing to many major U.S. retailers, including Montgomery Ward and Polo Ralph Lauren. *Women's Wear Daily* reported



that the U.S. Customs Service valued the country's apparel imports at \$10.7 million in 1993 and that Nicaragua exported \$67 million worth of apparel in 1995.

One of the companies in the free trade zone targeted by the National Labor Committee was a Taiwanese manufacturer that produces denim and denim products. The company has three facilities in Nicaragua and employs 3,600 workers, mostly women from Nicaragua. About 130 of the women are from Taiwan. Most managers are Taiwanese men and the supervisors are mainly Taiwanese women. As one of the largest producers of denim in the world, the company was contacted immediately following the "Hard Copy" broadcast by some of its largest clients: Wal-Mart, JCPenney and Kinart. These and other U.S. businesses generate about \$150 million in sales for the Taiwanese garment manufacturer. Buyers from the U.S. retailers pulled their orders until the garment maker responded to the allegations made by "Hard Copy."

Understandably, apparel buyers, continuously under scrutiny to address sweatshop allegations, want to be assured that suppliers do not exploit workers. With more than 6,000 suppliers, JCPenney Co. outlines its policies in a legal compliance program booklet for suppliers. JCPenney suppliers and their contractors are required to maintain the same level of legal compliance and ethical business practices in all activities as JC Penney. Excerpts from the booklet are as follows:

"JCPenney's purchase contracts explicitly require our suppliers to comply with all applicable laws and regulations, including those of the United States and those of any foreign country in which the merchandise is manufactured or from which it is exported. Our contracts also require all suppliers to impose the same obligation on their contractors....

Based on these expectations, if we receive notice from the U.S. Department of Labor or any state or foreign government labor authority that a factory being used by a JCPenney supplier has violated applicable labor laws, we will direct the immediate suspensions of all shipments of merchandise to JCPenney from the factory....

As soon as JCPenney discovers or learns of a potential or alleged legal violation by a supplier or its contractors, we will notify the supplier, fully investigate the situation, and, if we determine that the allegations are supported by credible evidence, take corrective action. If the supplier does not cooperate in the investigation, the result will be the termination of our relationship with the supplier."

Therefore, the garment manufacturer received detailed requests from its concerned clients. Buyers wanted the names of the factories and their general managers; descriptions of the legal compliance policies, programs, and procedures; roster of the workers for each factory, including birth dates of workers, wages, hours worked, and overtime payment; and the results of

inspections or investigations by Nicaraguan labor authorities, U.S. Embassy officials, free trade zone officials or any outside mandatory enforcement agency. One such request came from JC Penney on Nov. 14. The garment manufacturer had one week to respond with satisfactory answers or ties could be forever severed with the company.

The owner of the company immediately contacted Hill & Knowlton to help resolve this problem. Hill & Knowlton is the second largest public relations agency in the world, with 48 offices in 28 countries. The Hispanic group in the international division of Hill & Knowlton in Los Angeles was given the assignment. Alan Elias, senior managing director, and Miguel Medina, senior consultant, headed the account team.

### **Goals and Objectives**

Hill & Knowlton set goals to ensure the success of the program. They were the following:

- \* To determine if the company was conducting its business according to Nicaraguan law
- \* To ensure that employees were treated fairly
- \* To ensure that employees were working under safe conditions
- \* To ensure that the company is conducting business in a socially responsible way
- \* To provide accurate, detailed information in a timely manner to buyers of the company's products
- \* To survey the political environment in Nicaragua and enlist the support of Nicaraguan officials

Hill & Knowlton set the following objectives:

- \* To retain the garment manufacturer's current clients
- \* To provide the company's clients with full disclosure of information
- \* To save the jobs of the company's employees
- \* To reinforce existing policies to the employees
- \* To increase the level of communication between supervisors and workers

Hill & Knowlton targeted three key publics for this effort. They included the following:

1. Employees of the Taiwanese garment manufacturer, including managers, supervisors and factory workers
2. Buyers of the company's products, especially those who were concerned because of the allegations made on "Hard Copy"
3. Officials of the Nicaraguan government

## **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

The first tactic was research. Hill & Knowlton first needed to explore the situation in order to determine a course of action. The account team gathered information from the “Hard Copy” report and became apprised of the political situation in Nicaragua. They found there were two different political interests there. One group seemed to be comprised of the new government of Nicaragua and the new press, and the other of the Sandinistas, the Sandiista press and the National Labor Committee. Officials with the Nicaraguan government felt that forces were trying to deter the development of Nicaragua because jobs were being lost in the United States and given to Nicaraguans. Mexico was under fire much in the same way when the United States lost 6,000 jobs when Levi Strauss moved to Mexico.

The agency questioned the General Consul of Nicaragua in Los Angeles who provided insight. Hill & Knowlton also phoned the Nicaraguan Secretary of Labor and Manager of the Free Trade Zone for information about the situation.

The Hill & Knowlton team set some research goals for the senior consultant’s trip to Nicaragua: to assess the situation thoroughly by reviewing company records, inspecting the sites, interviewing workers, visiting with inspection officials and meeting with supervisors and managers. After consulting with Elias, Medina would make recommendations and plan a course of action.

On Nov. 15, 1997, Medina traveled to Nicaragua and began his investigation. When he arrived on Sunday, Medina decided to tour the garment manufacturer’s facilities because “Hard Copy” reported employees were working seven days a week. Born and raised in Mexico City, Medina found this “Hard Copy” allegation unusual. Sharing the same heritage, he knew that Sundays were held sacred by most in his culture. Therefore, he was not surprised to find no employees, except for a security guard, working that day.

During his stay in Nicaragua, Medina talked with managers and workers. He found that most employees work a Monday through Friday schedule. Occasionally, they work on Saturday and seldom, if ever, work on a Sunday. Employee time sheets and other records supported the oral reports and also reflected that the company paid overtime to all factory workers.

In Nicaragua, the minimum wage set by the government for the textile industry is 500 cordovas a month. After reviewing the records of hours worked and payment received, he found no worker earning under 550 cordovas. In fact, most earned two to three times that amount--money that can go far in the Nicaraguan economy. Employees were rewarded for producing more than expected and were paid overtime, according to standards set by Nicaraguan law, if they worked more than nine hours and 35 minutes a day or 48 hours per week.

Moreover, he found a 29-page internal guide for all workers, approved by the Nicaraguan government, that outlined the obligations and rights of the workers. All workers received the document. Policies in the document addressed breaks, vacations, overtime, working conditions, health and safety issues, obligations and rights of the employees and of management, and disciplinary actions.

Medina discovered that, indeed, the free trade zone area was fenced as had been described on “Hard Copy.” The location was once used as a jail by the Sandinistas, and later the buildings were converted into factories in an attempt to use existing resources. Unlike prison walls, the fence resembled the kind used around a tennis court.

Medina inspected the hazardous materials area where the denim was dyed and washed. On each machine, he found posted procedures for safety. The instructions outlined how to handle the materials and operate the machine safely.

When inspecting the drum storage area, he found about 25 drums clustered together without any particular order. A few were rusted since they were outside, exposed to the frequent rains in Nicaragua.

Employees in the washing and dying area were questioned about their use of goggles, gloves and protective vests. All used goggles and the protective vest, but a few reported not using the gloves because they did not like doing so.

Hill & Knowlton found that the garment manufacturer had passed all safety inspections by the Nicaraguan government. The last inspection was dated Oct. 20, 1997, by the General Inspector of Labor.

When Medina visited the facilities on Monday when most of the workers were present, he made random selections of employees who looked particularly young. Although he had reviewed all employment sheets and found no workers under 18, he wanted to investigate the matter firsthand in case information was falsified. Each of the workers provided birth certificates. Only two were 19 years old. Of the 3,600 workers, only about 45 were 18 years old. Records showed no one under 18 was ever employed at any of the factories.

He met with women from the three facilities to investigate charges of sexual and behavioral misconduct. None of the women reported any such behavior. A few had been inspected by a women guard during random checks to deter stealing. (Company merchandise was found to be sold illegally in the local markets of Nicaragua; therefore, the company randomly checked employees for smuggling garments out of the factory.)

Hill & Knowlton determined from its research that the garment manufacturer was abiding by Nicaraguan law and was respectful of employees. Primary and secondary research revealed that employees were treated well and policies were followed in almost all cases. Therefore, the company's U.S. buyers had to be informed of these positive facts in a timely manner. If not, the company would lose its major accounts and thus employees would lose their jobs.

Medina held a meeting with the company manager, the three facility managers, factory supervisors and the company's Nicaraguan attorney to discuss recommendations. Hill & Knowlton recommended increased interpersonal communication between supervisors and workers and the use of direct media.

Hill & Knowlton recommended the following actions, which were implemented: The rusted barrels were replaced by new ones and the storage area was moved inside. Drums were organized by date, and when filled, they were deposited immediately according to government regulations.

Employees had to be made to use all protective gear, including gloves. If they did not adhere to the policy, they had to lose their jobs. Therefore, all were instructed by their supervisors to follow health regulations and use the protective gear. The Hill & Knowlton team, supervised by Elias, developed written guidelines that were distributed to all workers, and the agency produced a poster that was prominently placed in the factories. Materials were produced in both Spanish and Chinese. Copy from the "Safety and Health Protection on the Job" poster is as follows:

It Is the Responsibility of the Company to:

- \* Provide work and workplaces that are safe for our employees.
- \* Follow all laws and company policies governing job safety and health.
- \* Have an effective injury prevention program for our employees.
- \* Make our employees aware of any hazards they may face on the job and keep records showing that each employee has been trained in the hazards unique to each job assignment.
- \* Provide employees working with any hazardous or caustic chemicals proper safety equipment.
- \* Work to correct any hazardous condition that we know may result in injury to employees.
- \* Display this poster so everyone on the job can be aware of basic rights and responsibilities.

#### The Company Will Not:

- \* Permit an employee to be exposed to harmful substances without providing adequate protection.
- \* Allow an untrained employee to perform hazardous work.

#### Employees Have Certain Rights in Workplace Safety & Health:

- \* As an employee you have a right to file a complaint with management to request an inspection of your workplace if conditions there are unsafe or unhealthful.
- \* An employee may not be fired or punished in any way for filing a complaint about unsafe or unhealthful working conditions.

#### Employee Responsibilities:

- \* To keep the workplace and your co-workers safe, you should immediately tell your manager about any hazard that could result in an injury or illness to people on the job.

Even though no problems surfaced in these areas, Hill & Knowlton developed employee handouts about sexual harassment, safety and health procedures, wage policies and age requirements. Posters were developed and placed in strategic locations around the factories. In turn, managers met with supervisors to review these policies, and supervisors formally met with their workers. Hill & Knowlton also developed an age verification form to further ensure employee compliance with age requirements.

In addition, Hill & Knowlton advised the client to ensure that all working standards set by the United States be followed, even if they were not required by the Nicaraguan government. Therefore, the company put in place a stringent approach to policy making.

Media also met with Gilberto Wong, manager of the free trade zone. Since the owner of the garment manufacturing company wanted the government to deal with the media, Medina met with Wong and provided him with the Hill & Knowlton findings. He also helped him prepare press statements. On Nov. 18, Wong gave interviews to the press, and the other side of the story was told in the Nicaraguan media.

A two-inch thick report prepared by the Hill & Knowlton account team was forwarded to each of the retail buyers who was a client of the manufacturer. The report included a two-page summary sheet, a question-and-answer allegation response sheet (Exhibit 1) and all supporting data for in-depth analysis.

#### **Results Achieved**

Hill & Knowlton analyzed the press coverage. In Nicaragua, coverage in the new press was favorable. The Sandiista press made little attempt to cover the story. There were few follow-up

reports in the U.S. media.

Two companies, Wal-Mart and Kids International Corp., sent representatives to the factories for their own inspections. In fact, Wal-Mart gave the factories ratings of 92 and 80 on its visits. A score of 70 is considered satisfactory.

No orders were lost, and business for the Taiwanese garment manufacturer continued as usual. Moreover, no jobs were lost. In a country with unemployment rates upward of 40 percent and where 100 workers apply for just one job opening, Nicaragua needs employment opportunities for its people.

In five days, Hill & Knowlton was able to assess a volatile situation and make recommendations that strengthened existing policies by reinforcing communication channels. The achievement of the objectives meant that business was not lost and jobs were saved.

## **Exhibit 1**

### **Response to Hard Copy Allegations**

The following are our responses to the allegations made by Hard Copy. While we recognize that their report did not center on any specific company, we want to make it abundantly clear that with regards to our company's operations, all of the allegations are completely without merit.

***Allegation: "Workers in these factories are paid a base wage of 15 cents per hour, which is said to be below subsistence level"***

Fact: Minimum wage in Nicaragua for textile workers is \$500 pesos/month. The minimum wage paid to newly hired, untrained workers at our company is \$550 pesos, with the average employee of ours earning approximately \$1200 pesos per month.

***Allegation: "Workers, in some cases, are as young as 15."***

Fact: Our company has a strict minimum age policy, which requires all hires to show proof (most Nicaraguans use birth certificates) that they are at least 18 years of age. In addition, all hires are required to sign an affidavit (enclosed) further verifying their age. If, at any time, an underage worker is discovered, employment is immediately terminated.

***Allegation: "Workers are forced to work as many as 13 hours a day, seven days a week"***

Fact: The standard workday is nine hours thirty-five minutes/day, Monday through Friday. If, on occasion, the production schedule is heavy, workers are asked to work overtime--for which they are compensated at two times their regular, hourly salary.

***Allegation: “Workers are denied overtime pay.”***

Fact: This is absolutely false. All employees working more than 9 hours and thirty-five minutes in a single day, or 48 hours in a week, are paid overtime at a rate of two-times their regular, hourly salary. \*\*Documentation attached\*\*

***Allegation: “Workers are verbally, physically and sexually abused by their supervisors.”***

Fact: Absolutely false. Our company has a strong anti-harassment policy, which we enforce. The policy -- attached -- informs workers to report such behavior to a manager, without fear of reprisal.

***Allegation: “Workers are exposed to dangerous chemicals.”***

Fact: All employees, whose job involves working with the chemicals necessary for our factory production, are a) provided safety gear (including gloves, goggles, masks and aprons, and b) are provided training in the safe handling and use of these chemicals.

***Allegation: “The Free Trade Zone uses barbed wire fences and armed guards to keep the workers in and visitors out”***

Fact: The government of Nicaragua, in working to protect the investments of the Free Trade Zone as well as to protect its workers, set up fences around the zone. Our employees have identification badges and must pass by guards--just as large American and other international companies do in securing their facilities. Our employees are free to leave the Zone during their lunch breaks, if they so choose.

***Allegation: “Bleach, solvents and dyes are washed into outdoor, open pits.”***

Fact: Our company strictly meets and exceeds all Nicaraguan environmental laws. All chemicals used in our production are disposed of properly, with our employees trained in the use of those chemicals. \*\*A copy of our workplace safety policy is attached for your review.

***Allegation: “Empty, rusted barrels of chemicals are stored in the open and not in controlled areas.”***

Fact: As stated above, our company strictly meets or exceeds all Nicaraguan environmental



safety laws. Furthermore, we do not store any dangerous chemicals in non-controlled areas.

***Allegation: “The workers’ housing conditions are substandard”***

Fact: We pay our employees wages that are, on average, far above the minimum wage for textile workers and other industries in Nicaragua. Just as is the case in the United States and other democratic countries around the world, it is up to the individual employee to make his or her own decisions regarding housing.

**Against the Grain: Zambia's Hunger Crisis  
and the Controversy Over Genetically Modified Food**

**b j Altschul, M.A., APR  
Assistant Professor  
School of Communication  
American University  
Washington, DC USA  
email: [bj@american.edu](mailto:bj@american.edu)**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
and the International Public Relations Association, [www.ipra.org](http://www.ipra.org)

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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

On the verge of a severe hunger crisis during August 2002, countries in sub-Saharan Africa had to confront a major policy choice: whether to accept genetically modified (GM) food aid. Several initially were reluctant but eventually decided in favor. One country – Zambia – resolutely held out against. The controversy revolved around several key dimensions, most notably the possibility of unknown risk to human health and the environment and fear of adverse economic impact from loss of export markets to Europe, which had banned imports of GM food. Opponents also charged that the United States was using developing nations as a dumping ground for surplus GM maize.

Zambia became something of a flash point for an already polarized debate. The arguments pro and con contained subtleties that went well beyond simple summaries, and the narrative for this case illustrates both the range of perspectives and the confusing nature of the issue, which has caused doubt about providing GM food aid even in the minds of members of the scientific community. Rather than approach the situation from the perspective of a single organization, this case takes a policy analysis approach to understanding the multiple interests at odds over the issue. It reviews the thinking and actions by many of the major players – government, industry, the agricultural community, scientists both for and against, consumers and the international aid community – and their interactions with one another. The case illustrates some of the problems with communicating complex scientific information publicly under the pressure of having to make decisions absent a complete understanding of the impact of either the science itself or the decisions in progress.

Among all of the stakeholders analyzed, several already are engaged in or plan to develop educational or awareness programs supporting their viewpoints. One stakeholder category, pro-GM scientists, now recognizes more clearly the kind of role scientists can play in creating awareness of *both* the benefits and the risks, not only of genetic engineering but of the full range of technologies that comprise biotechnology. Prompted in large part by the events described herein, what is emerging for the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia is the beginning of a program that, in effect, is a comprehensive public relations plan tailored to what people know, think and do.

## **Problem Statement**

Facing the worst drought in 60 years and the worst famine in 20 (Masci, 2002), several nations in southern Africa have been trying to stave off mass starvation while a potential solution to the hunger crisis embroiled them in controversy. For one of those countries, Zambia, thousands of tons of food aid in the form of genetically modified (GM) corn from the U.S. were offered and shipped late in 2002, only to sit undistributed to those in greatest need. Government officials feared the unintentional spread of GM plantings that might further threaten Zambian food exports to Europe, which had a ban on importing GM food. While neighboring Zimbabwe and Malawi placed a condition on accepting such food aid – that the GM maize could be accepted and distributed provided it was first milled so that the kernels could no longer be used as seed – Zambia held its ground rejecting the corn shipments, citing uncertainties about the safety of the product for human health.

The problem extends beyond the surface debate about the science of whether GM food is safe to the role of a sovereign developing nation caught in a trade conflict between the U.S. and the European Union. It isn't only the health and environmental effects of GM food that are in

question; the relationship between a small nation at risk and the powers of the developed world also is a concern.

How the Zambian government communicated during this crisis, and the parallel communication efforts by international relief organizations, internal government agencies, international economic bodies, the agricultural industries, small farmers at home, NGOs and other stakeholder groups provides insight into communication and policy-making under pressure. Rather than examining the problem from the point of view of a single organization, this case takes a multi-stakeholder approach. What follows is an account of the strain among many interests that built over a long period of time. Given the limitations of the case format, this narrative will not attempt to describe the strong feelings triggered by those desperate to relieve the stress of constant hunger and poverty and the diplomatic clashes of making economic policy from competing perspectives. But it is a significant backdrop against which to consider how to resolve this complex economic and cultural problem.

The approach used in this case is a continuing analysis of current policy on an issue that is still not resolved. It affords an opportunity to consider in depth the GM food question, a lightning rod for several other interrelated issues alluded to above, and also to consider the social, political, economic and cultural context. In the current situation, organizations representing different interests have made decisions with varying outcomes, both good and bad. Rather than focusing on a single organization, the following sections integrate some of the thinking from a range of these interests.

## **Background**

### *The context*

One of sub-Saharan Africa's most urbanized countries, Zambia is still emerging from a colonial legacy of mismanagement and a weak political structure in the years since achieving independence from Great Britain in 1964. (Smyth) Corruption has remained prevalent, despite free elections and new political leadership. (United Nations Integrated Regional Information Networks) Life expectancy is about age 35, and the literacy rate is about two-thirds of the residents. (United States Department of State [Background Note](#)) The agriculture sector counted for 85 percent of total employment in 2000, with ample prospects to increase agricultural output. But weak transportation infrastructure into the rural areas and flawed choices in economic management, including which crops to plant, meant that drought and flooding in various parts of the country, poor harvests and depletion of strategic grain reserves inevitably would lead to problems achieving food security nationwide. In recent years the country also has accepted an influx of refugees escaping civil strife in Angola and the Congo.

In combination, these factors led to a potentially severe hunger crisis. At the height of the crisis, in 2002, between 2.5 and 3 million Zambians were at risk out of a total population of 10 million. The situation was further complicated by the devastating impact of AIDS affecting the most productive age groups, adults in their prime physical capability for working their farms. On top of that, debate grew over which form of economic assistance might best provide relief, i.e., direct food aid, money, trade or some combination of these approaches.

When the crisis first began to unfold, the environment for planting and advancing the use of genetically modified (GM) crops was not good. Thanks to illiteracy in the rural areas, lack of interest and a lack of significant investment or dialogue on scientific research and development, there was little public awareness of biotechnology, whether agricultural or otherwise.

(Chinsembu & Kambikambi, 2001) Little opportunity existed for communication among scientists, government and the public on matters of food and environmental safety.

This situation presented a unique combination of communication challenges. Crisis by nature dictates a heightened awareness of salient issues. Part of the debate and the dialectical sequence of events revolved not only around technological capabilities and outcomes but also what one writer called “the right to culturally acceptable and safe food.” (McEwan, 2003) Power issues between urban and rural stakeholders, and between the developed and the developing world, also deepened.

Pratt (2003) discussed in depth the precedence in Africa of communal over individual loyalties. Consensus, common good and mutuality of interests are additional values, with an opportunity for all stakeholders to become involved in communication “for social well-being and self-improvement.” (p. 453) These ideas establish some of the context in which the GM food conflict has developed.

#### What happened

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) had been closely monitoring the food shortage situation in southern Africa since December 2001. Up to 14.4 million people in six countries – Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe – would need some form of humanitarian food aid through the following year’s harvest. Early in 2002, USAID pledged it would deliver nearly 500,000 metric tons of food aid valued at more than \$276 million, making the U.S. government the largest donor to the United Nations’ World Food Program (WFP) efforts in southern Africa.

Matters came to a head during the summer of 2002 when these nations expressed reluctance to accept genetically modified maize as food aid. Eventually most agreed to permit it provided the kernels first were milled so that they would be unsowable. Only Zambia held out resolutely against it in any form.

Not that agricultural biotechnology was completely forbidden within the country. At the University of Zambia (UNZA) in Lusaka, some researchers already were studying plant biotech. In 2000, Zambia had participated in the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nairobi, where 64 governments and the European Community had signed the Cartagena Protocol for Biosafety. Representatives recognized the potential of biotechnology to boost agricultural production yet at the same time found sufficient cause for concern that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) could enter the environment and upset the natural ecological balance. The Cartagena Protocol established disclosure standards for exporters and permitted nations to reject shipments of GM food from other signatories on the basis of the precautionary principle. (Myers, 2000) Briefly, this principle allows taking action to prevent harm to human health and the environment even if scientific evidence about cause and effect is inconclusive. African countries pleaded desperately with developed nations to give priority to helping them build capacity so they could implement the Cartagena Protocol. The U.S. did not sign this agreement.

#### Research

In 2001, Panos, a research institute that seeks to stimulate informed debate about development among different social groups, organized focus group discussions together with the Zambia National Farmers’ Union (ZNFU). (Madihlaba, 2003) One of the oldest and largest associations in the country, ZNFU seeks unity to enable the 150,000-plus farmers it represents, both small-scale and commercial, to determine and drive change. Although the organization aims for utilitarian policies that reflect the greatest good for the largest number of members, the thinking in the focus groups was clearly divided on the GM food issue. Small-scale farmers

wanted more information about agricultural biotechnology, while commercial producers opposed GM crops for fear of losing existing non-GM exports to Europe.

During the 2001 Annual Congress, ZNFU mandated formation of the ZNFU GMO Committee to represent these diverse viewpoints. At the committee's first meeting, members still did not reach consensus and decided first to explore levels of understanding of the full membership. Concurrently, the committee looked into biotechnology and biosafety policy from other countries in the region including the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

In January 2002, ZNFU began its in-depth study (Gregory & Simwanda, 2002) with meetings in various parts of the country. Representatives of different ZNFU stakeholder groups participated, expressing their views on the benefits and risks associated with adoption of GM crops in Zambia. Meetings sought to clarify issues and to correct misunderstandings. In addition, the meetings involved personnel from government ministries, departments and research institutions, as well as from private companies, parastatals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), district farmers' associations and the ZNFU secretariat. The outside consultants who conducted these meetings for ZNFU also visited with local representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the European Union (EU) and USAID.

A month later, the consultants presented a summary of the issues that had arisen during the previous separate meetings at a half-day workshop in Lusaka. Here, too, both stakeholders' representatives and the international development community attended and most had been consulted during the preceding series of meetings. To form the basis for a position on biotechnology, the consultants presented recommendations that the full ZNFU adopted unanimously. The intent was for ZNFU to use these recommendations during discussions with the Zambian government as the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy was under development.

Since all members believed the level of awareness of both the potential benefits and risks associated with GM crops was low, an awareness campaign was a key recommendation. (Gregory & Simwanda, 2002) This would provide information to all stakeholders as an improved basis for decision-making. ZNFU should seek funding from the international development community to support this effort. Small-scale farmers should be involved in every step and ZNFU's magazine, the *Zambian Farmer*, should be used as an educational tool. Public participation was considered a guiding principle throughout the consultants' report, with the National Biosafety Authority required to make information available to the public regarding research, development, use and commercialization of GMOs or related products. A public comment period would be required as well.

Interestingly, the consultants advised that further national stakeholders' consultations should be canceled. Their reasoning was that the structure did not produce the intended results because participants had little knowledge about the issue. A better structure, they felt, would be under the auspices of the ZNFU committee, which should eventually become a representative pressure group.

#### *The problem heats up*

As the food shortage worsened in Zambia, Vice President Enock Kavindele convened an open meeting in June with the WFP, to which he invited 10 tribal chiefs. This conference overwhelmingly rejected GM food aid. (Ho, 2002a)

The government called for a national consultation on whether the country should accept GM food aid. Citizens participated in meetings, and in interactive radio and television programs. Both residents and Zambians who lived outside the country wrote letters on the issue to

newspaper editors. This deliberation led next to a government-sponsored public debate on August 12. (Lewanika, 2003; Bohannon, 2002) Zambian scientists themselves were deeply divided. Two pro-GM scientists from UNZA, Dr. Luke Mumba and Dr. Fastone Goma, complained of being left out of the planning committee for this debate. (Madihlaba, 2003)

A few days later, the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre and the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (2002) issued a report recommending no introduction of GM maize into Zambia. Bernadette Lubozhya, the report's researcher who was an agro-scientist herself, supported maintaining the government's initial position, yet also recommended wide public discussion of the National Biotechnology and Biosafety Policy that was under consideration. She also recommended immediate steps to build capacity to test agricultural products and detect introduction of GMOs.

Relief shipments already had arrived in the country by this time and were stored in warehouses awaiting distribution.

But on August 16, Zambia's President Levy Mwanawasa stopped distribution of GM food already in the country. (Ho, 2002b) The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was coming up soon in Johannesburg, South Africa, and this action would set off considerable drama between developed and developing countries. USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios visited Zambia en route to WSSD; Mwanawasa reaffirmed to him that Zambia would not accept GM food aid. (Lazaroff, 2002)

Between August 26 and September 4, at the WSSD, the U.S. government pledged \$100 million over the next 10 years to support agricultural biotech in the developing world. (Masood, 2003) Heinz Imhof, chair of Syngenta, a Swiss plant science firm, announced that his company would not file for patent protection of its biotech inventions in least-developed countries, and the World Bank said it would open "an official dialogue on the place of biotech in economic development for poorer nations." (Glassman, 2002) Despite these offers from countries of the north, Natsios expressed exasperation when it came to the Greens for "instigating Zambia's decision... 'I have never seen such disinformation and intellectual dishonesty'," he was quoted as saying. News reports said Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth and other organizations actively lobbied Zambia and other African countries. (Glassman, 2002)

While the main WSSD meeting was going on, PELUM (Participatory Ecological Land-Use Management) held a Small Farmers' Convergence. In another concurrent event, the health ministers from 10 southern African countries heard an address by the World Health Organization's head, Gro Harlem Brundtland. (Lazaroff, 2002) On August 27, 126 groups that were critical of GM food aid signed a letter charging the U.S. with using coercive techniques to introduce GM crops into African nations and dumping grain there that was not wanted elsewhere. (Lazaroff, 2002) On August 28, Natsios was especially pointed with his remarks. In an interview with a U.S. State Department staff writer, he charged that small advocacy groups from other developed nations (not the U.S.) "have launched a campaign of disinformation" regarding GM food risks. (Fuller, 2002; Lazaroff, 2002) To counter that offensive, he invited Zambia to send a delegation of its own scientists to visit the U.S. on a "fact-finding" mission.

#### Point/Counterpoint

Zambia's Minister of Agriculture, Mundia Sikatana, told Dr. Mae Wan Ho, a scientist from the United Kingdom's Institute for Science in Society, that he saw coverage of the hunger crisis on American television news that showed old film clips of emaciated Ethiopians and Somalians, not Zambians. Sikatana claimed that no Zambians had died from starvation. (Ho, 2002a) Following completion of the report by the team of scientists based on this tour, President

Mwanawasa reaffirmed his rejection of GM maize. The scientists' account acknowledged both the advantages of the technology and studies on GM food safety that they deemed inconclusive, sufficiently so to warrant their recommendation supporting rejection as a precautionary measure. (Consumer Unity & Trust Society, 2002)

That fall, the tug of war between supporters and opponents of GMO food aid continued unabated. During a workshop on agrobiotechnology and food security in South Central Africa at the University of Zambia in Lusaka, participants considered prospects for outreach to a range of stakeholders under the sponsorship of *Biotechnology and Development Monitor*, a journal published in the Netherlands (Netherlands). A UN World Food Program meeting in Rome considered but did not adopt a policy recommended by Barcelona-based activist group, Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), in a paper entitled "No to GM food aid." (Jere, 2002)

Consumer International (CI), a network of consumer groups in 115 countries, also held a Bio-technology and Food Security Conference, but several prominent aid bodies – FAO, USAID, WHO, and the EU – were conspicuous by their absence. Dr. Jocelyn Webster, executive director of the industry booster organization AfricaBio, held a press conference in which, according to one report, she chastised CI's Michael Hansen and ISIS's Dr. Ho. The latter had supported Zambia's position against GMOs. (per Ho, 2002b) Yet the government-owned *Times of Zambia* ("Anti-GMO scientists..." 2002) reported that scientists on both sides of the issue contended each other's arguments were misleading consumers. AfricaBio said the workshop was one-sided and global campaigners against biotech were giving out wrong information. To counter that, the group invited members of the Zambia Consumers Association to visit South Africa at Bio's expense to see what biotech is. On the other side, the South African Seed Organization maintained that the information packet for conference delegates contained materials biased against GMOs, charging that conference organizers were neither transparent nor balanced and had excluded supporters from attending. CI Africa insisted, however, that both sides had had a chance to speak and indeed, did speak. Zambia's Minister of Agriculture, Sikatana, reiterated government concerns the country could lose its European market if it introduced GM.

The European Union cemented its policy on GMOs, requiring all food or feed products containing more than .9 percent genetically modified ingredients to be labeled. ("EU reaches agreement..." 2002) And Zambia's President Mwanawasa made a final decision not to allow GM food aid, as Agriculture Minister Sikatana announced at a news conference that the country wanted its own scientists to explore the safety of transgenic foods. (Carroll, 2002; Bate, 2002; Shacinda, 2002) He ordered the team of scientists who had visited the U.S. to make their GMO report public. (ZNBC Radio 2, 2002)

The national moratorium was not totally effective, however. In an isolated incident, WFP workers distributed GMO maize from the U.S., and there were reports of hungry villagers looting some of the stocks held in storage. (Manski & Cella, 2002) Some government representatives said these reports were not accurate. (J. Mulutula, personal communication, November 11, 2003)

By this time, the U.S. had identified sources of unmodified sorghum and wheat as alternatives to GM maize, and other food sources also were tapped to alleviate the worst shortages. ("US to give hungry..." 2002; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2003) The bigger problem was to resolve the logistics of distribution to the parts of the country in greatest need. Access, not availability, was the greater challenge, thanks to the country's inadequate transportation infrastructure.



The picture improved somewhat for the 2003 harvest. Thanks to plentiful rains in part of the country, a bumper crop of grain helped Zambia and its neighbors produce about two-thirds of the food they needed. But devastation from AIDS, poor infrastructure and the dependency on rain continued to make farming difficult at best. (Polgreen, 2003) All of these problems require long-term help to enable the country's people to feed themselves.

As debate about GM food aid continued, USAID's Natsios charged that Europeans were spreading misinformation about biotechnology. (Masood, 2003; Fuller, 2002) The agency moved forward with a grant of \$15 million to provide support for policy-making and research in biosafety in Asia, East and West Africa. (Masood, 2003)

In May 2003, an international Biodevastation meeting gathered in St. Louis, one of the first times a gathering was concerned with "how genetic engineering is used to crush people of color" (Fitz, 2003) and to expand resistance among those who believe the technology is dangerous. On the industry's side, in June the U.S. hosted a Ministerial Conference and Expo on Agricultural Science and Technology in Sacramento, CA. This gathering of more than 150 ministers representing more than 100 countries was intended to offer policymakers in developing countries a smorgasbord of information for farmers and consumers, from state-of-the-art biotechnology to more traditional methods of increasing agricultural productivity.

#### *Journalists' visit provokes more questions*

Seven African journalists visited the U.S. for an overview of ag biotech. As reported by *The Times of Zambia* ("Bio-technology: The American view," 2003), they were examining the pros and cons as expressed by both supporters and opponents, and with an eye to the concerns Zambia had raised about the safety for human health and the environment. They realized debate gravitated to the extremes: it's the next great boon, or every new development is a potential "Frankensteinfood."

Michael Rodemeyer, executive director of the Pew Initiative on Food and Biotechnology (an organization that seeks a neutral stance) told them that polarizing the debate is confusing to the public and in effect stalls the potential market. He advised the journalists to re-focus their discussion in more practical directions. Several other experts expressed support along different lines. Oxford University's Professor Richard Dawkins, a leading British scientist, dismissed fears as irrational, saying that new crops are no different from those derived from centuries-old selective breeding techniques. USAID's Dr. Josette Lewis told the group that the U.S. government would not force biotech maize or other crops on African countries. At stops at Monsanto's headquarters in St. Louis, MO, and the National Corn Growers Association, the journalists saw T-shirts made from corn and techniques to help control damaging insect pests. A middle ground came from the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which saw benefits from biotech crops but wanted tougher regulation to ensure safety.

The bottom line was convincing in one way – the *Times* reported, "biotech is here to stay" – but still uncertain in another. The University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service's Scott Angle noted that most of the GM maize produced in the U.S. for internal use is intended for animal feed. He was unsure what type was sent to Zambia. "We don't know what we don't know," he said. ("Bio-technology: The American view," 2003)

#### *Where things stand now*

In August 2003, Zambia participated in a meeting of the Southern African Development Community, joining 13 other nations in adopting common guidelines to regulate GMOs and other biotech products, including GM crops and food. This conference determined that the region should develop mutual policy and regulatory systems based on either the Cartagena

Protocol, which was scheduled to take effect in September, or the African Model Law on Biosafety. (“South African countries agree...,” 2003) The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation pledged \$4 million to research GM technologies in Africa, part of the foundation’s \$25 million project to counter malnutrition (Masood, 2003). At the time of this writing, the next major gathering of significance to the case is an All-Africa Conference: Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa By 2020, scheduled for April 2004 and sponsored by the International Food Policy Research Institute.

### **Goals, objectives, and publics**

At the policy level, the Zambian government seeks to relieve hunger through aid, trade and agricultural development of crops that it deems safe, sustainable and desired by local communities, while protecting crops grown for export to the widest possible market. Communication messages to opinion leaders reinforce the desire to respect and be respected by international trade and relief resources.

The U.S. government, industry, food aid distributors and industry supporters seek hunger relief as well as acceptance of GM foods and biotechnology processes. These interests would like to see an increase in awareness and use of biotechnology as a key component in overall strategy to create food security throughout Africa. Industry’s goals also include neutralizing perpetual criticism, often seen as not based on sound science.

One fairly extensive list of publics comes from the Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, run by the Overseas Development Institute, an independent British think tank. The organizations identified may or may not want to see Zambia eventually accept GM food per se, but they generally accept that the technology is coming, like it or not. In that vein, some are suggesting that the appropriate questions to ask concern how to adapt the technology to the country’s (or the region’s) growing conditions and its unique needs and capabilities as well as how to ensure safety and health. In this list, Patrick Kalifungwa is Zambia’s Minister of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources. Acronyms and organizations not referred to elsewhere in this case study are: SC, Save the Children; INESOR, Institute of Economic and Social Research (multi-disciplinary research wing at the University of Zambia); FANRPAN, Food and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, active in eight SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries; DFID, Department for International Development in the United Kingdom; UNAIDS, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS. HODI is an NGO that works with local groups in poor communities to strengthen socio-economic capacity and assist with relief efforts including disaster responses and food shortages. According to information at <http://www.Reliefweb.int>, failure by some agencies in the southern part of Zambia to train community members in relief efforts led to food stocks rotting, including GM maize.

The Forum identified these target publics:

- Parliament: via MP Kalifungwa

- Government departments: especially VP’s office (Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit); Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Health; Food Reserve Agency

- Monitoring networks: Famine Early Warning System Network; Vulnerability Assessment Committee

- Consortia

- Private sector: e.g. through Food Reserve Agency

International NGOs: e.g. Oxfam; SC; Care; Concern; Action Aid; Family Health International and through the Forum for International NGOs

Civil society and local NGOs: e.g. HODI; Programme Against Malnutrition

Research organizations: e.g. UNZA (especially FANRPAN country node in the Department of Agricultural Economics), INESOR

Donors: e.g. DFID; EU; USAID; World Bank

UN/Humanitarian agencies: e.g. WFP; FAO; UNAIDS

Farmers: e.g. through Agricultural Consultative Forum (Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, 2003)

Farmers can be segmented further by whether they are small-scale or commercial and whether they are members of any agricultural organizations, for example, the ZNFU or the Zambian Export Growers Association.

To this list of publics should be added the following:

The Zambian Office of the President

The Zambian population – in particular, those who are or have been at risk for food security in any given year

Private companies, mostly multi-national, that produce GM foods

Industry trade organizations both in-country and regionally, among them A Harvest Biotechnology Foundation International (AHBFI), AfricaBio, The African Biotechnology Stakeholders Foundation (ABSF), and, most recently, the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia (BOSZ)

As a gatekeeper public, the news media also should be targeted, with distinctions between state-owned and independent outlets, in-country and international media including online formats. These are discussed further in the next section on strategies.

How best to move these diverse and often conflicting groups through the decisions that will lead to resolving the problem often involves bringing as many of them together for discussion and dialogue as possible. Although some decisions were required on the spot during the height of the crisis in 2002, for mid- and long-range planning the choice about accepting or rejecting GM food ultimately is one for national policy, in conjunction with the national development program. (Essegbey, 2003) Hence, the large number of meetings that have been held to date, several of which are noted in this case.

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

The strategies reviewed here were reported either by the organizations themselves on their own Web sites or by the news media, both in-country and outside. Before reviewing individual organizations, this section first looks at the media as carriers of information and then at how the media portrayed some of the rhetoric in the debate.

#### *Role of news media in reporting agricultural news and information*

Note that the government owns the *Times of Zambia* and the *Daily Mail*, both widely circulated newspapers, as well as the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC). Other important media are an independent newspaper, the *Post*; a handful of private commercial and community radio stations; satellite services that broadcast international television news, and an increasing number of online media including Web versions of those already named. According to the International Journalists' Network, government practices toward independent media still reflect a high degree of control, harassment and censorship.

According to the UK Department for International Development, both print and electronic media play important roles in disseminating agricultural information to farmers. Radio programs for farmers emphasize practical knowledge to produce quality crops for both home consumption and for sale, including marketing advice. In particular, when the radio programs are allowed to operate freely, there is ample time for feedback and discussion about food security issues, which could be incorporated into community decision- and policy-making. (Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa, 2003) Other organizations are assisting rural residents, especially women, to form small groups or listening circles to learn how to use the medium of radio for a variety of purposes, from education and information to grassroots organizing for community needs.

#### *Use of rhetoric during the crisis*

Heath (1992) explained the use of rhetoric from a public relations perspective as a tool of self-interest on the part of both organizations and individuals for the purpose of negotiating relationships. Rhetoric can be seen as a dialogue, aiming to adjust people to ideas and ideas to people. It can explain the dynamics among a situation, audiences, messages, sources, channels and the environment for public opinion. Although it deals with truth, the facts of a situation nevertheless may be interpreted with regard to both their accuracy and their meaning.

But when the focus is on the message sender rather than the receiver, problems can result if an organization assumes its publics will view the situation the same way the organization does once those publics have the same facts for review. Outright lying also may cloud the picture when conflicting groups try to resolve differences of opinion.

This happened often as the U.S. shipped tons of GM maize to Zambia and its neighbors. The war of words became quite pointed. On several occasions, USAID Administrator Natsios said advocacy groups were spreading disinformation about food biotech. But he said specifically that these groups were not NGOs: “The NGOs have released statements supporting the food distributions,” he said. “They have been distributing food from the United States all around the world – CARE, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services – for seven years now. They know it’s GMO food.” (Fuller, 2002)

In addition to *disinformation*, Natsios said trade-related concerns by Zambian officials stemmed from *misinformation* originating from the EU. Although Zambia feared loss of exports to Europe if it accepted GM food aid, Natsios noted that the EU does accept seven varieties of GM corn from the U.S. already. (Fuller, 2002)

One American academic, Jason Lott, affiliated at the time with the bioethics department at Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa, researched a theory that purported the WFP and USAID were fronts for industry in the U.S. This theory alleged first that the private companies in the U.S. wanted to get rid of surplus produce under government auspices, and second that the African governments bought into the first assumption to deflect attention from their own management problems. Presumably, the first part of this supposition started with fringe groups in the EU, an outgrowth of high mistrust of GM foods. (duVenage, 2002) These most likely were the groups whose members Natsios was referring to and who staged protests at policy meetings to try to exert an influence on government policy.

The rhetoric from the U.S. peaked at its sharpest in Fall 2002 when Tony Hall, the U.S. ambassador to the UN’s food agencies, said, “People that deny food to their people, that are in fact starving people to death, should be held responsible...for the highest crimes against humanity in the highest courts in the world.” (“US calls food aid refusal...,” 2002)

The following winter, Dr. Luke Mumba, dean of natural resources at the University of Zambia, and several other biotech defenders visited London and Brussels under the auspices of industry-funded lobbying organizations EuropaBio and CropGen. As reported by *New Scientist* (Coghlan, 2003), the group traced Zambia's fear of GM foods to concerns voiced by the British Medical Association, which carried considerable weight in Zambia because of strong historical ties to Britain. Earlier, the BMA had expressed doubt about health and environmental risks in producing and eating GM food products. But Dr. Mumba himself had shifted his stance, away from concern that GM foods carried risks greater than those of traditional non-GM foods, to focus instead on the caliber of the guidance scientific experts offered policy makers in government. In an op-ed for Zambia's independent newspaper, *The Post*, he previously had written:

All of us who consider ourselves to be experts in biotechnology must accept that we have not done enough to guide our policy makers on the subject. Each time we are afforded a forum we are invariably issuing contradictory statements on GM maize and biotechnology in general. Little wonder that our government is to date undecided on whether or not to accept maize aid from the US. (Mumba, 2002)

The BMA did intend to review its policy to determine whether it needed to be updated. Pro-biotech leaders noted several other medical societies that voiced confidence in the safety of GM foods.

#### U.S. Government/USAID

The U.S. Agency for International Development is the largest donor to Zambia and the other countries of southern Africa through the UN's World Food Program. On an on-going basis, USAID seeks to increase citizen participation in democracy and governing by enhancing opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process. One aim is to make government more accountable and public decisions more accessible and effective. The agency supports a stronger role for privately owned media as well as free and fair elections. (United States Agency for International Development, 2002)

Relevant to this case, USAID operates FEWS Net, the Famine Early Warning System Network. Local food security reporters monitor conditions that might place segments of a population at risk and provide regular assessments to decision makers so they can commit resources to avert or alleviate the effects of famine. Data are collected and transmitted via satellite to report on slow-onset disasters such as drought. Other information requires human interpretation for problems created by people, such as conflicts that prevent relief providers from having access to those who are at risk.

FEWS Net also provides timely information to the news media and the public, with the intent of strengthening accountability, involving civil society, and developing sustainability. Regular reports, warnings and other alerts are all posted on the Web, available to those who have computer access, in addition to hard copy distribution. As a broad goal, FEWS Net seeks to "build partnerships based on trust, professionalism and open communication." One of the tactics it uses to accomplish this is wording its announcements and alerts in "clear non-technical jargon [emphasis added] that can be widely understood within the user community." (Famine Early Warning System Information Network, 2002)

#### NGOs in Zambia

The Forum for Food Security in Southern Africa (2003) reports that NGOs in Zambia typically work independently rather than coordinating their efforts either among themselves or

with the government. Nor do they see much chance of influencing government policy. The result often may be conflict or duplication of effort. Nevertheless, in their advocacy role on behalf of the poor, NGOs do have a favorable track record promoting local crops that are sustainable and drought-resistant, for example, cassava and sorghum.

#### Government of the Republic of Zambia

President Mwanawasa led the process and the announcements about the decision to reject GM food aid. Media owned by the government reflected that choice and according to the UK's *Guardian Unlimited* (Carroll), minimized the risk of famine. "Several warehouses storing GM maize have been looted but ministers favouring its distribution have stayed silent, apparently intimidated after the president threatened to arrest an opposition deputy who said constituents had starved. Refusing GM food was popular with the urban elite which saw the issue as a test of national strength, while the hungry villages which wanted it lacked political muscle, one diplomat said." (Carroll)

Despite the differences in how outside media perceived and reported on the government's motivations, there are signs of wrestling with both the process and the outcome. Before, during and after the peak crisis period, ministers of several agencies participated in high level international and regional policy meetings. Late in 2002, President Mwanawasa required the team of scientists who had visited the U.S. to make their report public, with the intent both to show transparency and to convey potential dangers of GM maize. (ZNBC Radio 2, 2002) By spring 2003 the country had completed development of a draft National Biotechnology and Bio-Safety Policy; part of its five-year plan calls for enacting legislation to govern research, development, and utilization of GMOs.

#### Industry's response – the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia (BOSZ)

Concerned that government policies against accepting GM food aid were preventing efforts to rejuvenate Zambia's agriculture, leading scientists including a team from the University of Zambia formed the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia. Only one member of Parliament participated in the launching ceremony in April 2003, in spite of the ministry of science and technology having participated in the preparations for the event. Nevertheless, a number of the scientists who attended were optimistic that their planned awareness campaign eventually would persuade the president and other policy makers to shift to a more favorable stance toward ag biotech.

Dr. Luke Mumba, dean of natural resources at UNZA and interim BOSZ chairman, said, "Our priority is to mount an aggressive awareness and educational campaign that will bring all stakeholders on board to discuss all the issues relating to the technology. This is the only way the Zambian public including the government can make an informed choice regarding biotechnology." (Hanyona, Gogo & Bosire, 2003) The intent would be to generate interest and awareness for training, research and infrastructure and to clarify that genetic engineering is only one part of biotechnology, according to Mumba.

The campaign also can be expected to reach out to "the common man in Zambia," explaining all aspects of biotechnology. Mumba sees biotech as a landmark opportunity to improve the country's socio-economic status. ("Body to popularise..." 2003) At the same time, the campaign will point out not only the benefits but the risks as well. Biotech would be part of a mix of both "old and new environment-friendly technologies" showing a commitment to sustainable development

At this writing, the campaign strategies have yet to be developed. BOSZ has, however, identified several objectives, among them:

To provide a forum for sharing and exchanging experiences and practices in biotechnology with a view to strengthening its application for increased food security, health and improvement, poverty alleviation, industrialization and environmental conservation in Zambia;

To improve public understanding of biotechnology through provision of accurate and balanced information particularly to producers, consumers, media and policy makers to ensure that biotechnology is proportionately represented at all levels of society;

To create capacity for information generation, dissemination and wise use of biotechnology. (Forwarded by C. Davies, from C. Kakunta, personal communication, October 16, 2003)

BOSZ already has begun to participate in meetings both within the region and beyond. As of October 2003, the organization had a full-time secretariat and was working toward establishing communications facilities.

Much attention will be directed to improving public understanding. Both Hon. Emerson Mutenda, the lone MP attending the launch meeting, and representatives of the Africa Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum (ABSF) placed a high priority on getting “accurate and balanced information on the benefits and dangers of biotechnology” to parliamentarians. (Hanyona, Gogo & Bosire, 2003) Most Africans have little awareness or understanding of biotechnology, creating a void that leads to sensationalism and distortion when the news media report on the gridlock between the U.S. and the EU on the issue. Inability to decide – for lack of either information and knowledge or the capacity to evaluate and monitor applications of biotechnology within the country – creates further controversies and stresses for the Zambian public. As Prof. Wanjiru Mwatha of Kenyatta University’s botany department, Kenya, observed, “there has been no scientific proof that genetic maize is more harmful than non-genetic maize.” (Hanyona, Gogo & Bosire, 2003)

## **Results, Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is difficult to attribute specific results to specific communication actions, some of which are too recent to gauge their impact. Nevertheless, the Zambian government has adjusted some of its policies regarding regulation and development of biotechnology as its representatives have learned more about the requirements for protecting bio-safety and bio-diversity. These are key concerns among both critics and supporters of industry.

Although the crisis situation has been slightly alleviated, at least temporarily – a result of shipments of alternatives to GM maize (i.e., wheat, and non-GM maize), successful distribution effort by relief organizations, a better harvest than last year enabling a higher percentage of the population to receive food and a bit of luck with slightly better weather and climate conditions – the USAID’s FEWS Net warned that Zambia’s food crisis is likely to continue for a third year in certain parts of the country. If Zambia’s government continues to inform itself and is responsive to the varying interests of affected stakeholders, there may be an improvement not only in reducing the severity of the hunger problem but also in increased dialogue on science policy and involvement of small farmers with the government policymaking processes.

The United Nations Development Program spells out three areas of advocacy in Zambia to improve links among opinion leaders and enablers – traditional leaders, civil society, academic researchers, government at both the central and local levels and political leaders. (United Nations Development Program, 2003) To be effective, the UN recommends, advocacy first should focus on clear and simple communication that answers questions of what the

problem is, what needs to be done and who can do it. Second, the policy community should share and debate ideas, and lobbying should be targeted to those who have the power to make the changes sought without overloading them. Third and ultimately, the UN explains, the goal is to reduce poverty and hunger:

The needless confrontation of consumers against the use of transgenic crop technology in Europe and elsewhere might have been avoided had more people received a better education in biological science. This educational gap -- which has resulted in a growing and worrisome ignorance about the challenges and complexities of agricultural and food systems -- needs to be addressed without delay. Privileged societies have the luxury of adopting a very low-risk position on the GM crops issue, even if this action later turns out to be unnecessary. But the vast majority of humankind does not have such a luxury, and certainly not the hungry victims of wars, natural disasters, and economic crises. (p. 139)

In the section above that discusses rhetoric, some of the limits of this approach as a tool of persuasion should be apparent. If any side becomes so entrenched in its position that it becomes incapable of hearing accurately what the other sides are saying, there may be little room for mutual adjustment. A way around it is to assess how each party sizes up both its own views of an issue and how its publics size up the same issue. This coorientation (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) draws on the two-way symmetrical model of public relations to analyze public-organizational relationships. As the parties orient to each other, they assess knowledge about each other and related issues, attitudes or feelings they may share about an issue, and actions they take that affect each other regarding common situations. The accuracy of their perceptions of each other and how the parties view the issue is the first step toward overcoming gaps and eventually achieving understanding and agreement.

For example, when the delegation of Zambian scientists visited the U.S. in 2003 to learn about the full scope of biotechnology, their report surprised industry supporters by nevertheless holding firm on the recommendation to reject GM food aid. One of the lessons this outcome suggests is that it takes more than information alone to change perceptions and attitudes. An understanding of local contexts and history is key as well, and in this case, a look particularly at the role food plays in a culture's life.

To determine which will be the most valid policies for Zambia's needs will take a mix of informational/educational programming together with continued efforts at building relationships that generate understanding among the diverse perspectives. Awareness by itself is not enough; it needs to be accompanied by a recognition of both the benefits and risks of GM food, seen as but one of many steps to help the nation and the continent achieve food security. And this needs to be considered in the context of political arguments offered by NGOs on the power relationships between the developed and the developing world.

Government and the new Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia should look to other industry support organizations in Africa, among them A Harvest Biotech Foundation International (AHBFI), ABSF and AfricaBio, for examples of the kinds of promotional and educational activities they might undertake themselves. Interpersonal communication and use of online technology are likely to be key strategies.

Dr. Florence Wambugu, a prominent Kenyan scientist, founded AHBFI (A Harvest Biotech Foundation International) to help alleviate hunger, poverty and malnutrition in Africa by promoting sustainable agricultural development especially in rural areas, and by increasing ag yields and income through biotech activities. The organization works not only on improved



media coverage but on influencing government policies, forming a pan-African network, supporting regional biotech organizations, assisting grass roots organizations and international outreach. Tools AHBFI uses include its Web site, a newsletter and a newspaper, all available in both hard copy and online, to share information that will help farmers, policy makers and other publics make better decisions.

In sum, opponents of GM food aid to Zambia argue that developed countries in the North – who speak from the comfort of an abundance of food – should provide aid in the form of either monetary aid or non-GM food, especially purchased from local sources. (James, 2002) Supporters such as Norman Borlaug (2003), known as the father of the Green Revolution that has been so effective in India and Asia, argue that starvation, not carefully thought-out applications of biotechnology, is the enemy of world health and prosperity. With the exception of some fringe activist organizations, there appears to be willingness among proponents of all viewpoints along the continuum to learn more about the issue over the long term. Values such as respect by wealthier nations of the developing world's needs, rights of local citizens to their own natural resources and the cultural role food plays in a given society are among the discussion points to explore. The technology no doubt will have an effect on local biodiversity, knowledge and sustainability. Whether that effect is positive or negative remains to be seen.

### **TEACHING NOTE**

The concept for this case has evolved through my own teaching experiences. The public relations challenges of food and agricultural biotechnology readily lend themselves to analysis from the perspective of multiple organizational interests: corporations, government, researchers, food producers and distributors, consumers, activists/advocacy organizations/NGOs, international trade and the news media.

Because food biotech is a “hot issue,” with frequent new developments, it seems better to approach the case study as a forward-looking scenario rather than a look back at a campaign or program that has a relatively clear ending. The advantage of this approach is to stimulate students in their own original thinking and problem-solving, rather than relying solely on what other organizations have done in the past.

#### **Questions for Discussion**

Regardless of which side of this issue you are on, who are the specific stakeholders and publics involved? What distinction can you make between a stakeholder and a public?

From the perspective of each individual group you identified, which of the other groups are key to helping any of them achieve their own objectives? Which ones are key to building some kind of working consensus on the issue?

What are some of the cultural differences between the developed and the developing world about decision-making? About sources, preparation, and labeling of food? About risk communication? How do these differences affect the way each stakeholder tries to craft its messages?

What forms of communication have each of the main stakeholder categories used to convey their views? Which formats or media might they use in the future that would be more effective in terms of their goals? In terms of reaching a consensus? Have there been any missed opportunities?

What rhetorical structure has each group used in its attempt to persuade others to its viewpoint? Which of these structures do you think is most effective? Why?

What is the difference between misinformation, disinformation, and propaganda? How can you prove that a message in reality represents any of these? (For a clear, brief definition, see <http://www.bartleby.com>.)

Are there any indications of “groupthink” or decision by committee, which may or may not necessarily result in the greatest good for the greatest number of people at risk? What role could public relations advisors play to help clarify the problem and a full range of alternative solutions?

Think about how the news media in different parts of the world – including online – have reported on the events in Zambia. If you were exposed to the media in only certain parts of the world, or to media that represented only one perspective (for example, government-owned, or industry-sponsored, or activist), how would that affect what different publics think about both the issues and the organizations involved?

How should public relations advisors help their organizations craft messages for the media as distinct from their other stakeholders? Do the news media adequately and accurately report on science issues? How do they present matters that one side or another claims are uncertain as to their effect on human health and the environment?

Activity: Compile a journal of the following key terms and their definitions from different sources, both in favor of and against the use of modified products. Use the Web to find different interpretations. Add to this list other significant terms as you come across them.

- (a) biotechnology
- (b) genetic modification
- (c) genetic engineering
- (d) conventional breeding
- (e) African Model Law on Biosafety
- (f) Cartagena Protocol
- (g) precautionary principle
- (h) famine
- (i) food aid
- (j) biosafety
- (k) biodiversity
- (l) organic farming

- (m) sustainable agriculture
- (n) sustainable developmentA

### **Three-Part Learning Approach**

One way to organize a class and ensure participation by all students is to create a three-part learning program. In Part I, students inventory their initial knowledge and attitudes, if any, through messages posted in the discussion area of a classroom intranet such as Blackboard or WebCT. Next, they self-select (or the instructor may assign them) one of the organizational interests listed above, on whose behalf they will role-play the top communication advisor or public relations counseling firm. Working in teams for those interests, they pick an actual organization to study in depth, from online news and information resources or any other materials they may be able to obtain. Continuing the online discussion, they share briefings with the other teams about their respective organizations, and begin to enact the communication behaviors and message styles as they discover them from their research.

In Part II, representatives from each team participate in an in-class panel discussion, moderated by the instructor or an invited guest expert. The moderator presents a “what if” scenario adapted from current news developments and asks how each team would respond or handle the situation. Participants must be knowledgeable enough about their organizations’ interests to answer “in character” – as well as to recommend other strategies and responses they think might be more effective. In Part III, after time to debrief from the face-to-face dialogue, teams prepare a mini-campaign for their respective organizations, proposing messages, strategies and tactics, and recommended methods to evaluate the effectiveness of these communications in the event they are implemented.

The problem of Zambia’s rejection of genetically modified maize as food aid emerged from one of the teams in a public relations cases class I taught at American University in Fall 2002. The crisis reached a peak near the end of the semester and remained in the news as the U.S. and the European Union clashed over GM food trade policy and the precautionary principle. As of December 2003, some initial moves toward resolution were taking place and a fledgling biotechnology trade organization has formed in Zambia, with the goal of helping the nation build its capacity in all of the sectors of this industry as well as biosafety, not just GM food.

### **Sample Instructions for Online Discussion**

#### *Stage I. Inventory*

As we begin our study of the debate about food and biotechnology – and the public relations implications about Zambia and why they’ve rejected shipments of genetically modified corn to help relieve their hunger crisis – consider what you already know, if anything, about this subject. Post a message specifically to *this* thread (i.e., “Getting started”). Write your own opinion, regardless of which stakeholder interest (“agency”) you will represent in the near future.

If you’re not sure where to start, some of the points you may want to address are:

1. Can you think of any food and ag products that have genetically modified ingredients? What are they? How do you know this?
2. How similar or different do you think (or know) biotech is from conventional genetics and breeding?
3. Does that similarity or difference make you think or feel any particular way?

4. Do you know anyone who cares about food and ag biotech, from *any* perspective? (i.e., from industry's point of view, or critics, or unsure consumers, or any other perspective)
5. Who is in charge of assuring the safety of the products of food and ag biotech? Who do you think *should* be in charge? Is it the same or different in countries other than the U.S.?
6. What are the possible benefits of using different biotechnologies in food and agriculture? What are the possible downsides? How do you know?
7. And just what *is* biotechnology, anyway? What difference, if any, is there between the terms "biotechnology," "genetically engineered," and "genetically modified"? Does it make any difference what we call it? Why?

You don't have to address all of these questions. They're listed simply to "trigger" your own awareness of what you do know and how you acquired that knowledge. After you've posted your own "original" message, please 1) check back often to see what your classmates have written, and 2) respond to *at least one* other posting. Be aware that at this point, some of what you may *think* you know in reality may turn out to be either inaccurate or a misperception. So don't be afraid to ask questions or to be skeptical.

### Stage 2. Discovery

For our second online discussion, begin to get acquainted with your client's perspective on the various issues of food and ag biotech. Each "agency" team is starting out with a choice of organizations whose focus represents one of the stakeholders in the debate. Find out from those organizations' Web sites and from searching on Lexis-Nexis what their positions are on food biotech and also what their communication style is like. Choose one of these organizations whom you will represent for the duration of our study. You may act either as the "agency of record" or the in-house public relations department.

From now on, your "voice" will be on behalf of your client(s) and their leaders, even if they have a different "take" from the opinions and knowledge you personally indicated during our first discussion.

In the Subject line of your message, please identify your client by name. Then write a summary of the client's (1) overall mission, (2) its policy toward food and ag biotech, or genetically modified food, etc., and (3) how the organization typically communicates.

Re #3, address whether the client seems to be the kind that welcomes public and media inquiries or clams up, whether it seems to be arrogant and powerful or willing to listen and negotiate, etc. Which model(s) of public relations does it appear to practice, based on what you can glean from news reports? How much effort does the client seem willing to invest in developing effective relationships with its constituents?

In addition to posting your own client's position, take advantage of this online dialogue format to respond to other postings, to seek clarification or to express a contrasting point of view. To qualify for a grade, you are required to answer at least two other postings by members of the class. Ask questions, get clarification of anything you don't understand or that piques your curiosity. We are still in an information-gathering or "discovery" stage, so we won't get into an active debate just yet – although some elements will be obvious.

### Stage 3. Perceptions

Your teams should now begin to interact regularly with your colleagues, just as the actual people and organizations do in the real world. In this third online discussion, consider how your organization views any of the *other* roles. For example, if you represent a company, who are

your allies? Who are your challengers? If you represent an activist organization, whose science, if any, do you trust? If you're a producer, who might it be worth your while to form a coalition with?

Start creating relationships and begin to think about what kinds of future strategies might help you advance your respective organizational missions. You may write in the voice of your team as public relations counsel or the head of your organization or its in-house public relations office, as you see fit.

For clarity, every time you post, please include a "tagline" as the very first line to identify your organization or "generic" role, for example:

--- Consumers

In our opinion, this policy is good (or bad) because... etc. ---

Again, to qualify for a grade, you are required to respond at least two other messages in a way that reflects you are *interacting* with others, not simply saying something simplistic like "me too."

#### Stage 4. Acting out

Now that you have at least a rough idea of what each organization is all about, what each thinks is important and what your opinions are of each other, think strategically. What messages are most important for you to convey, and to whom? How should you do this?

For example, some of you may wish to take a proactive stance and issue a statement for the news media. Some of you may wish to join forces and organize a protest. You may be asked by the news media to respond to an interview. And so on. Go ahead and "do" (or say) the kinds of things you think your organization has been doing or likely *would* do. And respond to one another as everything unfolds. You're the PR counsel, so you can do or recommend that your organization continue to communicate in its usual manner or you can recommend a different approach if you think it would be more effective.

### **Sample Scenario for Face-to-Face Discussion/ Debate/Problem-Solving**

#### **Research on AIDS and GM plants supported by major philanthropist... but will it help get food to Zambians who are ill NOW?**

[Background for the *entire* class]

Today's science fiction may be tomorrow's promise. Suppose...

GeneZ, a fictitious company that develops biotech food and medical products in the U.S., has been working with farmers who are field testing corn (maize) that has been modified to produce *monoclonal antibodies*. These antibodies are a kind of highly specialized organism that targets a particular kind of cell for a particular purpose and nothing else. In this hypothetical case, the antibodies will produce a vaccine that prevents HIV/AIDS. Both children and adults in at-risk communities will be able to eat specially produced corn and corn-based products the same way they eat regular corn, with the added benefit of preventing this disease.

GeneZ and its contract farmers have benefited from studies conducted by pro-industry scientists at a leading research university. Today – Friday – they are ready to announce a breakthrough in the technology and clinical trials that will make it ready for use in six weeks, just in time for a shipment of humanitarian and medical aid to Zambia and several other

developing countries in Africa whose workforce has been ravaged by the disease. The U.S. government has reviewed the test results and deemed them safe. A major charitable foundation plans to announce a major philanthropic donation to support further development of the pharmaceutical corn and is looking to one of the humanitarian relief organizations to assist in its distribution throughout southern Africa.

However, international trade partners, including many who are leaders in European government, have some doubts and want the corn producers to give them a seat at the table for all upcoming decisions about regulation, marketing and distribution. From their perspective, they're concerned about gene drift and possible "contamination" of non-GM corn fields. Over the weekend, a prominent activist group is planning to stage a raid of several acres of GeneZ's corn that have been part of the field tests.

For purposes of this panel, assume that the "designer" corn will be available initially through participating firms working strictly in conjunction with government agencies. An enormous sum of money is riding on the outcome of this new technology launch, as is trust and credibility depending on how different publics perceive the organizations involved. Each stakeholder should take communication action(s) that defends your position and tries to persuade the other publics of the merits of your position.

[Additional background information for the *named stakeholder team only*, with questions to be posed by the moderator during the panel discussion]

**Industry and pro-industry scientists:** Scientists who have developed this technology believe the "edible AIDS vaccine" could be eaten directly by humans as food, thus eliminating the need to purify the vaccine as well as hazards that are associated with shots. GeneZ has asked for help in developing a public education campaign targeted to health and humanitarian agencies about the new kind of corn. Many in the agricultural industries think their role for such "plant-made pharmaceuticals" should encompass both product safety, tight production control and protection of the interests of the food and pharmaceutical industries. At the same time, you don't want to run the risk of negative public perception as has happened with other products of food and agricultural biotechnology. Some of your researchers have even suggested that if the university is going to spend any money at all, it should be to keep the technology secret, despite the fact that the product itself will be offered on the market.

1. How would you handle this internal dilemma at the same time that *some* information about the "designer" corn's availability is on the verge of becoming public knowledge?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of public communication about this breakthrough?

**Developing countries:** Assume that virtually all of the children in the part of your population that has been experiencing severe malnutrition (due to famine brought on by prolonged drought) also are carriers of HIV/AIDS. How do you weigh the health and longevity elements in deciding whether to accept this new technology?

1. In what parts of your country do the affected populations live – urban or rural?
2. How do you know what their condition is and what they want or need? How do you get information to them – through which formal and informal media?
3. Do you have any literacy issues to contend with, or lack of media technology? What about the educational level needed to understand and support science?

4. Given your economic and cultural context, that's different from the U.S., what do you have to do to explain complex issues and science in a way that makes sense to your own citizens?

**U.S. government:** The “edible vaccine” can help children and adults who are suffering from poor health, in both industrialized and developing countries. Through the regulatory process, you and the FDA require producers to go through a required notification and permitting process that identifies the regulated product and keeps it contained and confined.

Beyond that, what kinds of communication strategies will you need to undertake to build consumer confidence, to help different publics understand and accept this medical kind of food product?

Will your strategies be any different for publics at home vs. abroad?

**European government:** Several of your members have some doubts about the plant-made pharmaceutical corn and want the U.S. corn producers to give your members a seat at the table for upcoming decisions about regulation and marketing viz. exports. They're concerned about gene drift and possible contamination of non-GM corn fields.

Given other food safety crises such as Mad Cow disease and widespread distrust of GM food, how do you think European consumers will feel about a plant-made pharmaceutical that can significantly help a major public health problem?

How will you find out? And based on what you learn, what will you do?

Will you support or oppose efforts by the U.S. to distribute the “edible vaccine” to developing countries? How will you communicate your decisions, and to whom?

**Activists/Advocacy organizations/NGOs:** You insist that environmental assessments aren't always conducted before GM organisms are released, and those that *are* conducted often are inadequate. Your activities planned for this weekend are as much to demand changes in the decision-making process as anything else – while the government has its application and permitting processes for those who want to produce these plant-manufactured pharmaceuticals, it isn't widely known and “transparent,” i.e., widely communicated and understood. There isn't any clear system yet for public involvement regarding “plant-made pharmaceuticals.” You fear that even if biotech crops haven't been used for food yet, they eventually will end up in the food supply. “Don't give us another ‘Starlink’” is your rallying cry.

What was Starlink, in the first place?

1. Will there be new, rigorous, industry-wide controls?
1. How will we *know*?

**Relief organizations:** You are very concerned about the life-threatening cyclical relationship between inadequate or poor quality food and a weakened immune system, compromised by the AIDS virus. Especially in rural areas, the people in this particular developing country have a short life expectancy (about age 33-35), much shorter than even a decade or so ago. Public education programs are a high priority for you.

1. What difference, if any, does it make to you that this AIDS breakthrough is in the form of a genetically modified crop?
2. What steps do you take to encourage that humanitarian relief groups include the people who are affected by HIV/AIDS in decisions about health relief programs?

3. What do you do about the different needs of children of different ages?

**Major charitable foundations:** You plan to announce a major philanthropic donation to support further development of the pharmaceutical corn. There are several kinds of support you can underwrite – the scientific research itself both in the U.S. and/or involving university researchers in a particular developing country, large-scale production of this plant-made pharmaceutical, or development of a country's internal healthcare delivery system.

1. Who will you seek further information from to help you make your decisions?
2. Who might you enlist support from to avoid the kind of criticism you've received in the past like when you contributed major funds for research on GM food?
3. With whom are most of your communications? What is your main message?

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### **Selected Web Sites**

#### **U.S. Government and Aid**

United States Agency for International Development

<http://www.usaid.gov>

Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy – Lusaka

<http://www.usemb.org.zm/wwwhusis.html>

Famine Early Warning Systems Network

<http://www.fews.net/Zambia>

#### **European Government and Aid**

European Union

<http://www.eurunion.org>

Department for International Development

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk>

#### **United Nations**

World Food Programme

<http://www.wfp.org>

#### **Government of Zambia**

Republic of Zambia

<http://www.state.gov.zm/index.html>

Embassy of the Republic of Zambia

<http://www.zambiaembassy.org>

### **Zambian Farmers and Regional Development**

Zambia National Farmers' Union (represents both small-scale and commercial farmers)

<http://www.znfu.org.zm>

Southern African Development Community

<http://www.sadc.int>

### **NGOs and Activists**

Consumers International

<http://www.consumersinternational.org>

GE Food Alert Campaign Center

[http://www.gefoodalert.org/news/news.cfm?news\\_id=3396](http://www.gefoodalert.org/news/news.cfm?news_id=3396)

GM Watch: Norfolk Genetic Information Network

<http://ngin.tripod.com/index.htm>

### **Biotechnology Industry and Supporters**

(Note: As of this writing, the Biotechnology Outreach Society of Zambia does not yet have a Web site)

Monsanto Africa

<http://www.monsantoafrica.com>

A Harvest Biotechnology Foundation International

<http://www.ahbfi.org/>

AfricaBio (South Africa)

<http://www.africabio.com>

African Biotechnology Stakeholders Forum (Zambia not a member as of 8/20/03)

<http://www.absfafrica.org/main.htm>

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University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

High mortality rates, illness and nutritional deficiencies threaten the survival of Nigerian children. Child labor, child trafficking and harmful traditional cultural and religious practices such as female genital mutilation and sharia endanger their freedom and rights. In 2000, advocacy and communication efforts on behalf of protecting children's rights were at a low ebb in the country.

In response, UNICEF forged an effective partnership with media for children's rights. Foreign journalists were invited for field visits and dialogues. Media packages were developed for the media houses. In partnership with NGOs, media programs were organized. Children Special Day programs and materials were distributed. The federal government's information policy makers/managers were invited to workshops.

The media campaign was successful in bringing children's rights to the public's attention because of the response of both the Nigerian and foreign journalists to UNICEF's program. The result was positive reports in the media locally and internationally on UNICEF's activities, advocacy and support for the protection of children's rights. The support of the federal government for children also increased.

## **Problem Statement**

Public relations practitioners communicate with all relevant internal and external publics to develop positive relationships and to create consistency between organizational goals and societal expectations. They develop, execute and evaluate organizational programs that promote the exchange of influence and understanding among an organization's parts and publics. The roles of public relations include effective communication to stakeholders of an organization to stimulate their interest and positive contribution to the organization's success. The focus of public relations practitioners is getting their message to more opinion leaders, raising awareness of their activities and increasing the positive and productive contribution of the stakeholders. Media are a frequently used means of communicating with relevant publics for an effective PR campaign.

The mass media put people in touch with the world beyond their immediate experience and shape people's perceptions and beliefs particularly in relation to events and topics with which people have little direct contact. While providing simplified and edited versions of the happenings in our complex and dynamic world, the media give people a feeling of participation and understanding. (Baskins, Aronoff and Lattimore, p. 197)

When practitioners build relationships of confidence and trust with journalists and other media practitioners, many mutually beneficial interactions can result. Media coverage can have significant positive or negative impact on every aspect of an organization's operations. Public confidence and public support are often determined by the treatment an issue or organization receives in the media. It is impossible to wage a successful public relations campaign without successful media relations. (Baskins, Aronoff and Lattimore, p. 196-197)

For effective media relations, the public relations practitioner must understand how the media function and how reporters work. Insights into journalists' views of public relations and work habits of journalists and other media practitioners are essential. (Baskin, Aronoff and Lattimore, p. 197-198)

A successful public relations campaign requires that the appropriate media are chosen after thorough media and audience research has been carried out.

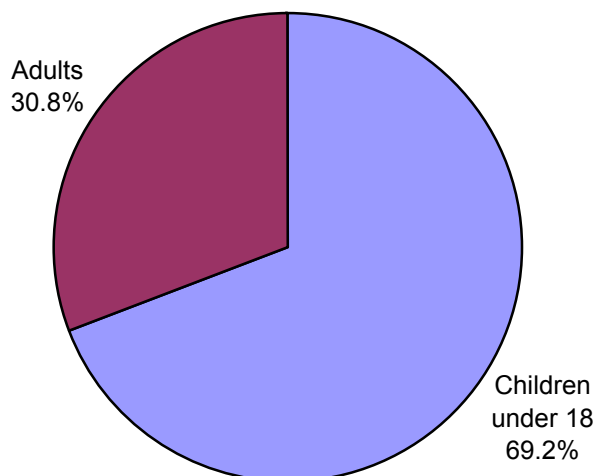
And that certainly is true for UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) in Nigeria. UNICEF’s Media Alliance for Children in Nigeria was an attempt to effectively use partnerships with media to create awareness and advocacy and to stimulate actions that would meet the needs and protect the rights of children.

## Background

Nigeria is a multilingual and multicultural country. There are 705 languages/dialects within an area of 923,768.68 square kilometers although English is the major language of communication. The country’s population is 113.9 million, and children account for 69.2 percent of the population (78.8 million). (www.unicef.org)

### Nigeria’s Population

Total population	113,862,000 (113.9 million)	
Population of under 5 years old	19,683,000 (19.7 million)	17.3%
Population of under 18 years old	59,108,000 (59.1 million)	51.9%
Annual births	4,628,000(4.6 million)	



Advocacy and communication efforts for the protection of children’s right are at low ebb in Nigeria. There is need for advocacy support for reducing child labor and ending child trafficking and harmful cultural and religious practices such as female genital mutilation.

Child survival is threatened by illness and nutritional deficiencies. Common diseases such as malaria, acute respiratory infections (ARI) and diarrhea account for the largest numbers of deaths of children, but other major threats to child survival come from vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) such as measles, diphtheria, polio, pertusis and tetanus. Inappropriate infant and child feeding practices, inadequate food intake and micronutrient deficiencies also are major determinants of illness and mortality. HIV/AIDS also is a significant threat to life of young children and adolescents. (National Planning Commission, p. 40)

Child trafficking in the West and Central African sub-regions increases each year. Thousands of children are removed from parental protection and trafficked across countries



including Nigeria, Benin, Ivory Coast, Garbon, Ghana, Mali, Togo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger to be used as objects of economic transactions and deployed into forced labor. (UNICEF, 2001)

Millions of Nigerian children between the ages 5 and 12 are active in one form of economic labor or another, and almost one-quarter between the ages of 5 and 11 work in hazardous circumstances. Several million children are engaged in the worst forms of labor on farms and plantations, in private homes, on the street and in commercial sexual exploitation. They work in conditions that cripple their bodies and minds, stunt their growth and shorten their lives. The work is so demanding that those lucky enough to attend school after a day's toil are too tired to learn.

At the top of the list of contributors to these forms of child endangerment is poverty, which ensures that children and their parents are easily susceptible to economic incentives offered by child traffickers. Other factors include lack of educational, training or vocational opportunities for the population in Nigeria. (UNICEF, 2001)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a not-for-profit organization, is the only United Nations organization dedicated exclusively to children. It works with other United Nations agencies, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide community-based services in primary health care, nutrition, basic education and safe water and sanitation to the developing world. It aims to reduce the terrible toll the lack of such services takes on the world's youngest citizens. (UNICEF, 1997)

UNICEF was created by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1946 to meet the emergency needs of children in the aftermath of World War II in Europe. In October 1953, the organization (then known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) became a permanent part of the United Nations system with a broadened role: to respond to the long-term needs of children living in developing countries. Its name was shortened to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 1997) but it retained the original acronym of UNICEF.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989. To improve the quality of life of children worldwide, enhance their dignity, protect their inalienable rights and ultimately mobilize and focus global attention on their physical, mental, moral and spiritual development, UNICEF organized a world summit for children September 29-30, 1990 at UN headquarters in New York. Seventy-one heads of state and government, including Nigeria, attended and signed a Declaration and Plan of Action which identified specific programs that impact directly on children. (Child Development Department, 1997)

UNICEF today is the leading advocate for children's rights, active in 158 countries and territories around the world. It has five field offices in Nigeria—Lagos, Ibadan, Enugu, Kadun and Bauchi—and one liaison office in Lagos, the capital. These offices are strategically located in the country for effective program implementation. In the year 2000, major UNICEF activities in Nigeria included intensified efforts to control the spread of HIV/AIDS, eradicate polio virus and eliminate vitamin A deficiency. There also was a Roll Back Malaria Summit where a consensus was reached to pursue a strategy of wide-spread use of insecticide-treated nets to control the malaria vector mosquitoes. A program to eradicate the guinea worm and a new initiative to make the school environment more friendly to children also were launched. (UNICEF, 2001)

While the global campaign to eradicate polio has had far reaching impact on several nations worldwide, Nigeria is one of 30 countries where transmission of the virus is still

reported. UNICEF has therefore given top priority to the National Programme on Immunization and the goal of eradicating polio from Nigeria in collaboration with the government, other UN agencies, Rotary, other non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors including Japan, the USA and the UK.

Efforts to reduce deficiency in micronutrients resulted in the setting of new standards for industrial fortification of food items with vitamin A, a measure that now has the backing of the legislature. (UNICEF, 2001)

Significant progress also was made toward reducing the impact of malaria, another killer disease to which children are most vulnerable. Nigeria initiated the African Roll Back Malaria Summit held in Abuja in April 2000 with the support of the World Health Organization and UNICEF. (UNICEF, 2001)

There also has been progress towards the eradication of guinea worm, with the number of cases reduced to fewer than 8,000 in 2000. Sustaining the success recorded in the year 2000 is likely to make possible the total elimination of the disease by 2005. (UNICEF, 2001)

UNICEF also intensified work aimed at protecting the rights of children. Annual special events such as Day of the African Child, National Children's Day and Labor Day provided opportunities to push for an improvement of children's rights. Trafficking of children in the West African region was one of the key issues for which legislation and a judicial framework to curb the trend was sought.

Another significant gain was the decision of two states to pass legislation forbidding female genital mutilation. A child-friendly school initiative was launched with the aim of improving the learning environment for children. A complementary informal education program was developed to provide educational opportunities for millions of girls and boys denied early education because of poverty or cultural constraints. UNICEF initiated dialogue with the authorities in those states where the traditional religious custom of sharia is practiced to ensure that international conventions signed by Nigeria on the rights of children are respected. (UNICEF, 2001)

All the programs could be effectively implemented because of a media campaign, the Media Alliance for Children, to affect changes in the attitude and behavior of stakeholders in actualizing the needs and rights of children.

### **Goals and Objectives of the Campaign**

The goal of the Media Alliance for Children campaign was to create awareness and advocacy, and to stimulate action of the stakeholders to meet the needs and rights of children in Nigeria.

Objectives of the campaign were to:

Make the Nigerian media aware of the needs and rights of children and to enable them to disseminate information to the public.

Increase advocacy for the needs and rights of children.

Make the public aware of the needs and rights of children.

Stimulate stakeholder support for the actualization of the needs and rights of children.

Win the support of the government/government's information policy makers for the program. (Odedele, p. 1)

### **Strategies Tactics and Techniques**

Tactics and techniques focused on:

Organizing workshops for local journalists.  
Organizing tours for foreign journalists.  
Staging special events.  
Packaging programs for the country's media houses.  
Partnering with NGO(s) to organize media events.  
Organizing workshops for the government information officers. (Odedele, p. 2)

The campaign forged effective media partnerships in the year 2000 through sensitization workshops and information sessions on children's and women's rights. These included a workshop for 45 members of the Nigerian Union of Journalists and the Nigerian Association of Women Journalists in the North-East. A sensitization session with photo journalists and another with disc jockeys were hosted by UNICEF to forge a strategic alliance with these media representatives in awareness creation, advocacy and action stimulation efforts on behalf of the needs and rights of children.

Assistance was given to a team of 12 US editors who visited Nigeria, while two special dialogue sessions and field visits were held with other international media representatives. Most international correspondents now see UNICEF Nigeria as a reliable source of current and objective information on children and women. Media packages were developed and distributed. The "Progress of Nations" and "The State of the World's Children" reports were especially successful; over 400 stories around these publications were carried in the print and electronic media. In partnership with the NGO African Children's Broadcasting Network, "a children in broadcasting summit" was organized as a forerunner to the proposed World Summit of Children's Broadcasting in March 2001. This was followed by training workshops for producers of children's programming for CSD (Children Special Day). An ongoing BBC Hausa (one of the three major Nigerian language radio services) research project conducted in the 19 Northern States also provided an avenue for wide distribution of CSD information and materials.

Twelve Abuja-based media executives and 16 press secretaries of federal ministries were sensitized on the Global Partnership for Children. And the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) provided an opportunity for broadcasting networks to demonstrate their strong collaboration in the advancement of children's rights. At least 70 broadcast stations transmitted programs produced, presented or involving children that day. One of these programs was an interview of Nigeria's Vice-President, Atiku Abubakar, by children. (Odedele, p. 3)

## **Results Achieved**

The response of Nigerian journalists to the workshops was impressive, and media publication of stories on the needs and rights of children increased: more than 400 stories were published in 2000 in both the print and electronic media. Foreign journalists sought out UNICEF for current and objective information on children. Some also accepted invitations to visit. Media packages for 10 special events were developed and more than 40 program packages were developed.

Children Special Day Program (CSDP) information and materials were widely distributed in the country, and 70 broadcast stations transmitted programs produced, presented by or involving children on the International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB). (Odedele, p. 4)

## **Conclusion**

Public relations is a planned, sustained effort to maintain mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. This public relations principle was demonstrated in the planning of the UNICEF campaign. The goal was well defined, clearly spelled out and properly implemented. There was strict adherence to the achievement of the campaign's objectives. The strategic tactics and techniques were well designed due to thorough research of the situation. Functional evaluation methods were used to monitor the effectiveness of the campaign. All of these factors contributed to the success of the campaign.

## **TEACHING NOTE**

### **Purpose of the Case Study**

- To make students aware that effective communication with stakeholders, government and other publics is the bottom line for many not-for-profit organizations.
- To make students appreciate the importance of research in any public relations campaign.
- To make students appreciate the dynamism of the mass media and how to use them in achieving public relations campaign's goals.
- To demonstrate to students how to cultivate and maintain good relationships with the media and how to use the mass media in a public relations campaign.
- To teach students the importance of goal setting, definition of objectives, effective planning and monitoring in a public relations campaign.

### **Identifying the Problem**

UNICEF identified a need to increase communication about and advocacy for children's needs and rights in Nigeria.

### **Identifying the Critical Issues**

The following issues must be addressed if the campaign is to succeed:

- Making the media aware of the UNICEF program so they can, in turn, disseminate information to the public.
- Increasing advocacy for the needs and rights of children.
- Stimulating stakeholder support for the actualization of the needs and rights of children.
- Attracting and gaining international support.
- Winning the support of the government.

### **Teaching the Case**

#### ***One Week Prior***

Distribute the case at least one class session before you intend to discuss it in class. Tell the students that you intend to focus on several matters during the discussion:

- The importance of research in a public relations campaign.
- The dynamism of mass media in researching audiences.
- How to use the mass media in achieving a public relations campaign's goals.
- Different ways to use mass media in a public relations campaign.
- Cultivating and maintaining good relationships with the media.
- How organizational policies affect public relations programs.

The importance of goal setting, defining objectives, effective planning and monitoring in a public relations campaign.

### First 30 Minutes of Class

Spend the first five to 10 minutes of the class session briefly recapping the facts of the case. Then for the next 20 minutes, have the students identify the following:

- The stakeholders in this case and their interests.
- The strategic tactics and techniques used in the campaign.
- Research methodology used to develop the plan.
- Methods of evaluation used to determine results.
- The reasons for the success of the program.
- What might have made the program even more successful.

Ask the students for their communication plan. What would they have done if they had been the UNICEF communication officers?

In their planning, ask the student to take into account the following:

Strategic Communication Objectives: What are the organization's strategic operational objectives and how can we link them directly to our communication objectives?

Audience Analysis: Who are we most concerned about reaching? Why do we want to communicate with them? What outcome do we hope for when we reach them?

Message Construction: What do we want to say to each of these audiences? Will our messages differ from one set of stakeholders to another? How simple or complex should the message be?

Medium Selection: How should we reach the stakeholders? Should we consider electronic means? How about print? Should we deliver our message through the press? How should we try to communicate directly with one or more of the stakeholder groups?

Measurement of Outcomes: How will we know if we have succeeded? What criteria should be used to determine success? If we are not successful, what should we consider changing first: medium, message, audience or objective?

### Last 15 Minutes of Class

Conclude the discussion. The key is to let students speak freely, but to guide their comments towards the issues facing the organization.

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**Public Relations Campaigns Reduce  
Violence in Panama and El Salvador**

**Mark Hucklebridge, APR  
Lecturer  
Department of Journalism  
California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, California, USA  
email: [mhuckleb@calpoly.edu](mailto:mhuckleb@calpoly.edu)**

**William Godnick  
Policy Advisor  
Latin America Security Peace Building Program  
(Name of Organization)  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Peace Studies,  
University of Bradford**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education

University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400

Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

In January 1995, the Secretary General of the United Nations lauded the “considerable progress” made in curtailing the production, trade and storage of weapons of mass destruction and called upon the need for “microdisarmament.” This was defined as “disarmament in the context of the conflicts of the United Nations... dealing with... light weapons, that are actually killing people in the hundreds of thousands.” (Bonn International Center) The Bonn Center for International Conversion identified 16 nations--including Panama and El Salvador—and documented abundant evidence of conventional weapons that posed a threat to peace and tranquility. (Bonn International Center) A municipal gun buyback program in Panama and a nationwide public relations campaign advocating nonviolence in El Salvador were implemented in response to this call for disarmament and were examined for this case study.

In 1997, Mayor Felipe Cano Gonzalez of San Miguelito, an impoverished community of 300,000 near Panama City, Panama, launched a weapons collection drive, “Programa de Intercambio de Armas por Mejores Condiciones de Vida,” translated as an Arms Exchange Program for Better Conditions of Life. A shanty town faced with limited resources and escalating gang violence best describes the poverty-ridden community of San Miguelito.

In El Salvador, a similar program, known as Guns for Goods, initially involved buying back and destroying violent video games to initiate community support for supporting non-violent activity and for making inroads into peacemaking. The United Nations observer mission collected more than 10,000 weapons and the Guns for Goods campaign collected 9,527 weapons, 3,157 magazines and 120,696 rounds of ammunition over four years. (Greenblatt)

In the San Miguelito weapons exchange program, community residents voluntarily surrendered hundreds of assault rifles and military weaponry in exchange for groceries, electronic appliances, employment opportunities and cash. Empowered by the mayor of San Miguelito, volunteers and paid staff from the fields of development, public health, education, crime prevention, social services, and community peace building solicited support from local merchants, private industry and Catholic Church. A website describing the San Miguelito program prompted a subsequent campaign in Mendoza, Argentina, that replicated and expanded upon many of the public relations strategies used in Panama. Because a previous San Miguelito program conducted in 1996 overtaxed the community’s resources. Mayor Gonzalez set a more reasonable goal in 1998 of recovering 1,000 weapons by the year 2000 to make San Miguelito a safer place in anticipation of a national referendum. (Cedeno)

The Panamanian Voluntary Weapons Control Program report, “Primer Programa de Intercambio de Armas por Mejores Condiciones de Vida” (“Weapons...not even as toys! An initiative for Small Arms Control in El Salvador”), newspaper articles from Panamanian newspapers and supporting documentation from web sites serve as the basis for this case study. The British American Security Information Council also provided electronic news service resources for this study.

## **Problem Statement**

To reduce the threat of violent crimes in nations in transition, weapons collection programs have been organized and promoted by local governments, private industry, non-governmental organizations and religious communities in Central and Latin America.



Although worldwide support had been garnered for weapons collection--most notably from the United Nations Development Program, International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), Rotary International, Arias Foundation and Ford Foundation--it has been difficult to document the tangible and quantifiable evidence that these programs improve well being for citizens where these programs were conducted.

## **Background**

Small arms and light weapons are defined as assault weapons, hand guns, rifles, grenades and machetes. A number of approaches and incentives encourage the surrender of these weapons to reduce the violence that occurs in communities where there is access to these weapons. Weapons are often introduced into a culture during an armed conflict. Yet after the conflict ends, many of the weapons remain in the country. While there is legitimate trade of these weapons, there is considerable illicit trade involving theft and black market sales. Weapons are perceived to be a symbol of pride and power by individuals, gang members and paramilitary groups. Large surpluses of weapons and limited police resources make it difficult to track the sources of these weapons and their availability frequently increases crime and casualties among vulnerable people. UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Fund) estimates that 80 percent of the victims killed by light weapons are civilians, mainly women and children. (Singh) There are an estimated 500 million small arms in the world, an average of one for every 12 people. (Singh) This figure is disputed and could be as high as 600 million.

Researcher Walter Dorn reports that:

...these weapons, which can be carried and used by a single person, make conflict more deadly and crime easier, feeding cultures of retribution and downward spirals of violence around the world. And besides taking a heavy toll in human life, small arms undermine development; where they proliferate, projects are obstructed. (Dorn)

The proliferation of handguns in Latin America may be attributed to a number of different sources. Before the U.S. military presence in Panama, few handguns accounted for violent crimes. When Manuel Antonio Noriega presided over Panama, there were tighter controls on who could keep handguns. When Noriega was brought to the United States on drug trafficking charges, the military junta and Panamanian government lost most of their power. The decline of support of the military dictatorship prompted greater access to weapons by gangs and "freedom fighters" who were less regulated under the provisional government. Access to weapons increased and the absence of a daily presence of the military and police gave rise to gang activity.

The International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) supports a web site ([www.iansa.org](http://www.iansa.org)) that includes United Nations documents, press releases and newspaper articles that track events worldwide related to small arms and light weapons collection efforts. To support peace-keeping efforts, nongovernmental organizations and some developing nations have supported voluntary weapons collection programs.

Professor Ed Laurance of the Monterey Institute of International Studies (Monterey, CA), a leading advocate of coordinated collection programs, initiated dialogue with international leaders and supervised the development of a web site for the Program on Security and Development (SAND) ([www.sand.miss.edu/research](http://www.sand.miss.edu/research)) in 1998. The earliest entry in the SAND website chronology describes a model gun buyback program in Seattle, Washington completed in July 1994. Other entries document the progress made in other nations with more extreme levels of gun violence. Additional research studies completed by the SAND program observed

early conventional arms control efforts in Albania, Cambodia, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Nicaragua and Panama. Professor Laurance met with United Nations staff to seek endorsement for a similar effort to mandate the collection of conventional weapons in post-conflict nations. The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) approved funding for research into Panama's efforts through a grant from the Ford Foundation.

Once part of Columbia, Panama became independent in 1903 after signing a treaty with the United States to allow the construction of the Panama Canal which was built between 1904 - 1914 and was managed by the U.S. until 1999 when it was returned to Panama. The canal and Panama's pivotal location for international trade have made the country a transit point for illegal drugs and weapons bound for Columbia in recent years. Offshore banking, tax shelters and easy company registration policies also have facilitated illegal arms trade. (Godnick and Vasquez) The majority of the population, estimated at 2.8 million, speaks and is literate in Spanish and English. Median age is 25. More than 80 percent of the population is Roman Catholic, 10 percent is Protestant and 2 percent is Islamic or Jewish. More than 60 percent of the labor force is employed in the service industry, 20 percent in agriculture and 18 percent in mining, manufacturing, transportation and construction. Thirty percent of the population is under 14, 63 percent is between the ages of 15 and 64 and 6 percent is over 65. Panama's per capita income is \$7,600 and approximately one-third of the nation lives below the poverty level; unemployment is 16 percent. School is compulsory until age 15. One of Panama's most pressing problems is the illicit cocaine trade which has economic, political and social repercussions. Public information about Panama is significantly less available than information about its Latin American neighbors. As of 1998, 38 television stations, 101 AM radio stations and 134 FM stations broadcast programming to area residents. An estimated 45,000 have Internet access. (Central Intelligence Agency)

In Panama, the community of San Miguelito was identified as a central receiving point for large quantities of arms prior to the United States intervention in Panama in 1989. (Operation: Just Cause) Godnick's original report suggested that, "Most of the illegal military arms currently in circulation were believed to be remnants of the Panamanian Defense Forces." (Godnick, 1999) There was also evidence that US military, drug traffickers and regional conflicts contributed to the proliferation of weapons in Panama. More recently, Panama had been identified as playing "a unique role in illegal arms trafficking." Its territory and waters have been used as key transit points for illegal weapons headed for the Columbian conflict, and the country's off shore banking, tax shelters and company registration practices facilitate illegal arms trade. (Godnick and Vasquez, p. 34)

San Miguelito's population lived in shanties with minimal means of support. Internal conflicts, gang fights and human rights abuses involved small arms as the weapons of choice. Youth gangs carried and used firearms, knives and machetes for armed robberies, assaults and self defense. Police records show that minors committed 60 percent of the region's crimes.

San Miguelito's Mayor Gonzalez launched a voluntary weapons collection program in 1997 that had to be suspended due to the volume of high-powered weapons that "exhausted all resources." In 1998, Mayor Gonzalez organized another arms exchange program with support from government agencies, military, nongovernmental organizations, private industry, the Catholic Church and local citizens.

An analysis of the Panama campaign was posted on a web site and adopted for a similar municipal buy back program in Mendoza, Argentina and a nationwide campaign in El Salvador.

El Salvador gained independence from Spain in 1821 and from the Central American Federation in 1839. A 12-year civil war incurring 12,000 casualties ended in 1992 when the government and rebel forces signed a treaty for military and political reforms. Several hundred thousand weapons were imported into the country during the war. The United States alone sent 260,000 grenades and 32,474 M-16 rifles to the Salvadoran Armed Forces during this time period. Scholars estimate at least 400,000 firearms are still circulating in El Salvador with only 173,000 legally registered. Indiscriminate violence instigated by gangs and rebels continues to be a threat in urban, suburban and rural areas, and 70 percent of all homicides involve the use of firearms. Laura Chincillal, former Costa Rican minister of security, has data to show that 82.7 percent of El Salvadorans regard their county as unsafe or very unsafe. (Godnick and Vasquez) Approximately 6.4 million people live in El Salvador with 37 percent under age 14, 57 percent between the ages of 15-64 and 5.1 percent 65 and over. The median age is 21.1 years. An estimated 80 percent are mestizo, 9 percent are white and 1 percent are Amerindian. More than half of the population is Roman Catholic. Eighty percent of the population over the age of 10 can read and write. Those percentages drop as one moves from the cities to more rural areas. Voting is extended to any citizen over age 18. Per capita income is \$2,189 and approximately 10 percent of the adult population is unemployed. Sixty-one AM radio stations and 30 FM stations transmit to 2.75 million radios and five national television stations broadcast to more than 600,000 televisions. An estimated 41,000 people have Internet access. (Central Intelligence Agency)

In El Salvador, an extraordinary nationwide public relations campaign involved government leaders, nongovernmental agencies and academics to develop a baseline public opinion research study. An advertising agency was retained to develop a multifaceted promotional campaign to generate public awareness and increase public support for arms collection programs. The “Strengthening Mechanisms for Small Arms Control” Project--launched in 2000--generated technical and financial support from El Salvador’s Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

The principal issues identified in El Salvador in 2002 were: 1) unemployment; 2) crime; 3) poverty; 4) the economy; and 5) a health system crisis. A “Firearms and Violence” study, a national attitude survey, focus groups, in-depth interviews and quantification of gun violence victims in hospital emergency rooms found that more than 60 percent of the small arms in El Salvador were illegal and that there were more than 450,000 arms in civilian hands in the country. The country was split--58 percent of the population said that it did not want a weapon and 42 percent said they were in favor of weapons possession. Nearly seven of every ten homicides, assaults and robberies were committed using firearms—with only half legally registered. (It is interesting to note that persons who used a firearm to defend themselves from any type of violent incident during 2000 died at a rate four times greater than those persons who did not attempt to defend themselves.) (Greenblatt)

### **The Panama Campaign**

#### **Goals and Objectives**

Goals:

Develop a model for arms exchange programs that could be replicated in other parts of Latin America and the world.

Develop a collaborative approach with governmental leadership, military, law enforcement, private industry, nongovernmental organizations, the Catholic Church and volunteers.

Improve safety by reducing the quantities of illegal arms in circulation, and prevent outbreaks of violence during the 1998 referendum and 1999 elections.

### **Objectives:**

Develop an awareness and appreciation for the importance of giving up small weapons.  
Take weapons away from youth and gangs.  
Collect 1,000 illegal arms by the year 2000.

### **Strategies and Tactics**

Prior to announcing the campaign, Mayor Cano Gonzalez and his staff developed collaborative agreements with the national police, military, health and social services, nongovernmental organizations and private sector sponsors to develop a workable system for the transfer of domestic goods (excluding alcohol and tobacco) in exchange for weapons. The mayor made this collaboration administrative priority. Three firearms exchanges were scheduled between March and July 1998. Press conferences attracted reporters from print and broadcast news. At the press conference, Mayor Gonzalez and Sergio Espinosa, police commissioner for the district, presented brief prepared statements, exhibited examples of the weapons to be collected and responded to questions. Stories about the weapons exchange program appeared on television and radio news and in at least 14 area newspapers.

Advertisements for the program were placed in television, radio and print media to promote the weapons exchange program. Advertisements informed the public about the opportunity to exchange firearms for food, construction materials, domestic appliances and employment. (Appendix) Television announcements and flyers distributed in the community stressed that no questions would be asked at collection points. Police, social service workers and volunteers distributed handbills with the Mayor's signature and official seal to encourage townspeople to relinquish their weapons. Flyers describing specific collection center dates, times and locations were distributed by mail and in locations that would have the greatest impact. Flyers and publicity stressed the time, date, location and rewards for turning in guns and the anonymity of the process.

Because Panama has an inconsistent power supply and limited access to computer technology, use of email and electronic communication was limited.

Some of the promotional materials included the monetary value of exchanges:

<u>Type of weapon</u>	<u>Exchange value</u> <u>(in U.S. dollars)</u>
Grenade	\$50-\$75
Shotgun	\$75-\$150
Firearms caliber 22, 25, 32, 38	\$150-\$250
Firearms caliber 357, 380, 9 mm, 44, 45	\$250-\$350
Military assault rifles	\$350-\$500

Resources for exchange were a combination of cash and merchandise donations from local supermarkets, department stores, construction firms, the municipality and ministries of labor and social services. In addition to the cash and domestic goods, job opportunities and community service projects for those who made weapons donations also were offered as incentives. The President of Panama contributed \$15,000 to help underwrite the campaign after the first successful collection.

## **Results Achieved**

A total of 108 illegal firearms, not including ammunition or explosives, was voluntarily turned in at three collection points between March and July 1998. Average cost per weapon was \$200. National police confiscated 97 firearms in raids following each voluntary collection.

In 1997, one sector of San Miguelito (known as Bulisario Porras) reported 5,124 cases of violent crime. As of August 1998, police recorded only 1,513 cases of violent crime for the year. In another sector (known as corregimiento de Mateo Iturralde), the incidence of violence was reduced from 1,588 to 236 for the same time period. According to the mayor, the violent crime rate was reduced by 75 percent after the implementation of the arms exchange program. Two major newspapers, El Universal de Panama and La Estrella de Panama, reported on the findings shortly after the police department released the statistics. (Berrocal and Novoa)

The exchange program offered the opportunity for employment of youth and potential gang members after they relinquished weapons. News articles about the effort appeared in Spanish language media that recognized the collaborative efforts and the success of the arms exchange program.

## ***The El Salvador Campaign***

### **Goals and Objectives**

Representatives from governmental and nongovernmental agencies and academic institutions collaboratively developed strategies to reduce violence in El Salvador by:

- Producing information to guide public policy and taking action to reduce and control firearms and lessen their impact on violence.

- Reforming weapons-related legislation and strengthening institutions associated with efforts to reduce violence.

- Raising social awareness and public education in favor of disarmament and non-violence. (Greenblatt)

### **Strategies and Tactics**

The “Toward Building a Society Without Violence” program in El Salvador brought together representatives from government, nongovernmental organizations and academe to identify and to document causes of violence and to develop a campaign to develop public support for violence reduction programs.

- The El Salvador public awareness and education campaign targeted three groups.

  - Girls and boys, 7 to 13 years old.

  - Young people up to age 35

  - The general public

In late 2002, more than 350 girls and boys participated in a program to exchange toy weapons for school supplies. These children came from 40 schools in the nation’s largest cities. More than 9,000 toy weapons were collected in exchange for t-shirts, caps, badges, notebooks and buttons. Twenty-eight half-hour radio shows featuring children and international experts were broadcast on Radio UPA, the children’s radio station.

Police officers distributed printed material regarding preventive, administrative and legal measures to 30,000 firearms owners. Molina Bianchi Ogilvy, an advertising agency, developed a promotional campaign that broadcast 1,700 commercials over five television stations, three cable TV stations and 140 radio stations. The four largest daily circulation newspapers ran 28 full-page and 14 smaller advertisements. An additional 475 posters were placed at bus stops and other public places. Through the advertising agency's efforts, the media offered a discount of 50 percent on the space used for advertising in newspapers. Radio time for public service announcements and special programs was provided free of charge.

The media messages showed children as the primary victims of firearms. The image presented was one of "children's happiness interrupted" rather than a polarizing debate over self-defense or the right to bear arms. (Greenblatt) More than 100 organizations joined the campaign to support increased awareness about gun violence. (Greenblatt)

Additional educational efforts included production of a play about the risks of firearms that ran on government-run cultural/educational television. The videotaped play was later shown and distributed in different parts of the country.

A festival was held to commemorate Disarmament Week, sponsored by the International Action Network on Small Arms. An international conference, coordinated by the Arias Foundation, brought together key leaders to address firearms proliferation in Central America. (Greenblatt)

## **Results Achieved**

Although a nation-wide follow-up survey has not been conducted to determine the overall effectiveness of the El Salvador campaign, there is evidence to show that awareness and citizen involvement increased significantly after the campaign began. Legislation has been proposed in El Salvador to enforce gun registration laws, curb the owning of arms, limit the number of weapons and ammunition an individual may obtain, raise the age to 21 for use permits and require gun-locking mechanisms to prevent harm to children. More than 100 organizations joined together to support the public awareness campaign and education efforts, demonstrating a strong sense of community concern and commitment to the issue.

School children, ages 7-13, increased their membership in Angels of Peace from 350 to more than 2,500 in the first year. Young people also increased their involvement in peace-making activity. More than 9,000 toy weapons were exchanged for school supplies at 40 schools and Tin Marin Children's Museum in San Salvador, and toy weapons were turned in at 34 recycling workshops. Twelve sculptures designed and built with recycled toy weapons were installed in municipal plazas, parks and recreational centers and in the Tin Marin Children's Museum. Approximately 6,000 t-shirts, 1,000 caps, 1,000 badges, 1,000 notebooks and 1,000 buttons with the campaign's logo were distributed to school children. Student members of Angels for Peace participated in workshops to help them develop their abilities to confront difficult situations without resorting to violence. Twenty-eight half hour radio shows about firearms and their impact on violence were produced and broadcast by Radio UPA, the children's radio station.

Local governments approved the posting of "weapons free zones" signs at markets and other places where large numbers of people gathered. In addition, 10,000 posters, 10,000 stickers and more than 2,000 t-shirts and 1,000 caps with messages supporting the issue were distributed to adults.

A play was produced about the risks of firearms and it was presented in schools, cultural centers, plazas and on the government-operated educational television station. A video of the play has been produced and circulated for further exposure.

A second phase of advertising is in the development stage, and information and awareness activities are now developing on a local level. Perhaps most noteworthy is the Regional Project on Arms Control which will involve seven Central American nations. The initial goal will be to generate additional public information and build alliances and strategies to implement a campaign across borders. Specific actions will be aimed at reducing the accessibility and number of weapons in the geographic region. Endorsements by public figures, celebrities and well known actors, athletes, artists and musicians are expected to increase the public support of symbolic efforts such as gathering signatures and organizing rallies at sporting events and concerts. The United Nations Development Programme of El Salvador reported that “the messages transmitted by the mass media campaign, forums, conferences and other activities have increased the awareness of different sectors and have generated a surge in opinion favoring disarmament.” (Greenblatt)

## **Conclusion**

The San Miguelito arms exchange program demonstrates how a local government can promote public safety, crime prevention and gun control with incrementally positive results. The local government understood its community’s needs and had the respect and responsibility of the community to accomplish the task

Unfortunately, how people heard about the arms exchange program was not tracked. To maintain confidentiality, no questions were asked upon weapons surrender and a social worker signed for the weapons received.

The fact that more weapons were collected voluntarily than by police raids in Panama suggests that community cooperation was enhanced through the public relations efforts. Mayor Gonzalez was subsequently elected to Panama’s national Congress where he supported additional efforts to sponsor gun buy back programs in his home district.

The extraordinary success of the El Salvador campaign demonstrated strength in numbers and the pervasive power of a national initiative. Calling upon the collaboration and support of public and private resources, volunteers and the general population influenced public policy and legislation for the greater good in society. An international conference brought together experts and journalists in three El Salvadoran cities to address the impact of arms on violence. More than 700 people attended the conference, which received widespread media coverage.

In Spring 2002, the Arias Foundation for Progress and Human Development convened a multinational workshop to explore areas of collaboration and to address concerns related to illicit traffic and control of firearms and the role of the Central American Security Commission. In 2003, the Arias Foundation held a follow-up conference in Costa Rica to bring together representatives from Costa Rica, Panama and the United States to continue dialogue on this critical subject.

## TEACHING NOTE

### Questions for Discussion

Why would public destruction of “tools of violence” serve as a compelling impetus to improve safety in a community?

The military and police impounded some of the weapons collected in raids following the collections. Is this an incentive for voluntary donations? What role should the military and police play in these gun buyback programs?

3. The grass roots approach used in San Miguelito is reflected in the flyers used for outreach. (Appendix) How could this message be improved without incurring additional cost?
4. Private sector support accounted for 50 percent of the cost of the Sam Miguelito campaign. Would this be as effective in Asia and Africa where private sector involvement is considerably less and nations rely more upon government initiative for social directives? Why or why not?
5. Are municipal arms exchange programs more effective or less effective than national campaigns, such as El Salvador’s “Guns for Goods” or “Weapons...not even as toys!”? Consider the scope and cost of national media campaigns as well as the impact and crossover of mass communications versus the grass roots levels of support engendered by individuals and local entities.

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#### APPENDIX

Text of mailer sent to San Miguelito citizens from Mayor Felipe Cano Gonzalez

REPÚBLICA DE PANAMA  
MUNICIPIO DE SAN MIGUELITO

LA ALCADÍA MUNICIPAL.

EL DIA JUEVES 12 DE MARZO DE 1998, A LAS 10:00 A.M.  
REALIZARA EL PROGRAMA DE INTERCAMBIO DE ARMAS  
POR: COMIDA, ARTEFACTOS, ELECTRODOMÉSTICOS,  
MATERIALES DE CONSTRUCCIÓN Y EMPLEO.

LUGAR: CAMPO DE JUEGO DE LA JUEGO COMUNIDAD DON BOSCO, AL LADE DEL  
CENTRO DE SALUD.

QUIEN TENGA ARMAS DE FUEGO PODRÁ

ENTREGARLAS. **NO SE HARÁ PREGUNTAS**

LICDO, FELIPE CANO GONZALEZ  
ALCADE MUNICIPAL

**English Translation**

Republic of Panama  
Municipality of San Miguel  
The Mayor's Office  
Tuesday, March 12, 1998

“Bring firearms in exchange for food, domestic appliances, construction materials and employment. Bring (firearms) to the playing fields of the Don Bosco community, at the side of the health center. Those who bring firearms may do so anonymously. No questions will be asked.”

**The Social Role of Public Relations in Latin America:  
A Ten-Country Community Relations Program Becomes an Effective Public  
Relations Tool for a U.S. Multinational**

**Donn James Tilson, PhD, APR, PRSA Fellow  
Associate Professor  
School of Communication  
University of Miami  
Miami, Florida USA  
email: [dtilson@miami.edu](mailto:dtilson@miami.edu)**

**Maria Schnabel, APR  
Director of Public Relations  
BellSouth International  
Atlanta, Georgia USA  
email: [schnabel.maria@bsi.bls.com](mailto:schnabel.maria@bsi.bls.com)**

Made possible by generous grants from  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

Multinational firms entering countries in transition face cultural challenges that often make it difficult for them to practice effective public relations. That, in turn, can inhibit their ability to develop the mutually beneficial relationships they need to establish with their key publics in order to meet their business objectives. Some of the challenges these firms face include the varying degrees of public relations expertise that is locally available as well as the different levels of understanding of public relations and its role as a management tool. Other challenges include unreliable media practices, competitors' different interpretation of rules and fair play and the public's perception that foreign companies invest in developing countries solely to make a quick profit.

The last challenge is a particularly sensitive one in Latin America, a region where there is little trust in public and private institutions, which, as a consequence, spills over to new foreign investors. In a region characterized by large socioeconomic differences, and in countries where government and private sector corruption is still prevalent, even the best-intentioned investor with the strongest corporate reputation in its homeland is likely to be viewed with an initial degree of distrust by the local Latin American consumer.

From that environment has emerged what is known as "the Latin American school of thought" in public relations, which posits that, for companies to be successful in the region, they need to become socially responsible corporate citizens. In other words, first and foremost, their public relations strategies need to be built around a foundation of corporate social responsibility. The concept is basically a macro-view of the two-way model of communication which concludes that only when the organization's key publics see it as a socially responsible entity that listens to their needs will they be ready to listen to the organization and develop a sense of trust.

One U.S. multinational company that has managed to successfully implement that type of socially responsible public relations is BellSouth, which has operations in 10 Latin American countries. BellSouth created a regional community relations program with the specific goal of demonstrating its intent to become a partner in the long-term wellbeing of the countries where it operates – in much the same way it does in its home market in the U.S. The program, BellSouth's Proniño (tr. "for child"), was designed to address one of Latin America's most pressing needs: the education of children who cannot attend school because from a very early age they need to work full time to help their families. With it, BellSouth has been able to help thousands of children to get an education. Beyond the social impact on the lives of the children enrolled in the program, BellSouth Proniño has helped the company to position itself as an active and committed community leader in social responsibility throughout the region. That, in turn, has allowed the company to develop and maintain important relationships with the publics on whom its business success depends: government, opinion leaders, customers and the media of the countries in which it operates.

## **Problem Statement**

As a foreign investor, a multinational corporation and a relatively new player in Latin America, BellSouth needed to develop a public relations strategy for the region that would allow it to overcome the challenges of the local environment and to position itself as a socially responsible company as well as a partner in the long-term wellbeing of the countries in which it operates. That, in turn, would enable the company to create a brand image as well as to develop mutually beneficial relationships with its key publics, particularly with the local governments, opinion leaders, the media and the public in general.

However, many of the social and cultural characteristics of Latin American countries make it difficult for multinational firms to succeed there using U.S.-style public relations practices. For example, two-way symmetrical communication, which the IABC Excellence Study advocates as essential for excellence, is difficult to achieve in the hierarchical cultures common in Latin America. As Sriramesh and White (1992) contend:

Societies with greater power distance in relationships [and that display higher levels of authoritarianism] will tend to be more elitist and ... harbour asymmetrical worldviews ... Public relations practitioners ... in these societies ... are also more likely to have authoritarian tendencies (p. 610).

Montenegro (2004) notes that in Latin America “the lack of communication between managers and employees has long been a historical tradition” (p. 110). Austin similarly observes that the region’s societal culture generally is characterized by a hierarchical structure – “paternalistic manager-employee relations and autocratic decision-making.” (Austin 1990, p. 354, cited in Montenegro, 2004, p. 110)

Underlying this asymmetrical worldview is a “lack of concern” that not only “extends inwardly into organizations” but externally into the community at large as a consequence of the region’s colonial cultural legacy. (Montenegro, 2004, p. 110) A feudal system under Spanish rule fostered “a government culture ... in which each level of government hierarchy attempted to compensate for low salaries by profiting from government service.” (Sharpe and Simões, 1996, p. 279) As a consequence, notes Montenegro (2004), “government graft and corruption became ingrained in the culture ... [and] many of the New World appointees ... appointed family members to positions through nepotism” (p. 110). In such a social environment with its “overemphasis on family ownership and self-interest in social, political and economic issues ... family needs take priority over community needs.” (Montenegro, 2004, p. 111) Sharpe and Simões (1996) similarly observe that such a system “failed to create the recognition of serving the community as a facet of public relations performance” inasmuch as “meeting the needs of the poor is viewed primarily as a responsibility of the church and the government rather than of private corporations and businesses or individual citizens” (p. 284).

However, even as the region generally has taken an inward focus, a sense of social responsibility has developed over the years in certain circles. Institutions of higher education in journalism (e.g., in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico) began offering a liberally based curriculum of humanities and the social sciences in the mid-1930s; in particular, “private Catholic universities ... emphasized social concerns.” (Ferreira, Tilson and Salwen, 2000, p. 62) The scholarly focus on “social communication” – training journalists to publicize and correct social ills – was further supported in the 1960s and 1970s by programs developed by the Quito, Ecuador-based Centro Internacional de Estudios Superiores de Periodismo para América Latina (CIESPAL), a pan-regional journalism training and education institute. This approach argued that “practicing journalists ... needed to be made socially aware of the region’s experiences with poverty, dictatorships, foreign exploitation and other social problems.” (ibid, p. 65) In recent years, social responsibility has become a major theme of interest at regional conferences of public relations educators and practitioners, such as those organized by the Congress of the Inter-American Confederation of Public Relations (CONFIARP) and the Latin American Association of University Careers of Public Relations (ALACAURP).

Still, such discussions are not very broadly based in Latin American society, which remains dominated by asymmetrical worldviews. Given their power and influence in society, opinion leaders with such a mindset inhibit two-way symmetrical communication, which is

essential for excellence in public relations. Furthermore, practitioners in such insular, hierarchically structured environments will often use communication “to manipulate publics for the benefit of the organization” (Grunig, 1989, p. 18), which “steers ... practitioners toward actions that are unethical ... [and] socially irresponsible.” (Grunig and White, 1992, p. 40) Such organizations “can wreak havoc on their publics when their fundamental values and assumptions ... suggest that it is ethical for the organization to ‘exercise dominion’ over that environment.” (Grunig and White, 1992, p. 42)

In Latin America, such an asymmetrical communications style can extend to relations with the media, leading to practices that include paying for journalists to use news from companies. This, in turn, has complicated the objective reporting of corporate news, which is essential to building public trust in institutions. As Tilson and Rockwell (2004) report, according to Garvin (1999), government payoffs to journalists “are customary throughout much of Latin America, where salaries for journalists are usually very low. Those who work in the news business often find that they are expected to supplement their income off the job... an entry-level newspaper reporter makes as little as \$350 a month.” (Garvin 1999, p. 8a, cited in Tilson & Rockwell, p.417) For example, in Mexico, Long (2004) observes that “at times, the media, as with government and other institutions, have been a part of the entrenched corruption that afflicted Mexico for all of the twentieth century... the media received its marching orders – and frequently plain brown envelopes filled with pesos – from the dominant political party and other special interests . . . In many cases, the cash changed hands before stories were written; on occasion, the envelope came in appreciation for a certain story or placement.” (p. 46)

As Tilson and Rockwell (2004) report, in Central America also, newspapers and radio stations often sell advertising disguised as news in a format called *campos pagados* (tr. “paid space”). Because they are not labeled as advertorials, readers can easily mistake them for real news.

However, some of the leading public relations consultancies in Latin America now report a sea-change in such behavior. In interviews with the leading public relations firms in Mexico, Long (2004) reports a change in attitude on both sides of the news desk. One of the principals in Zimat Golin/Harris notes that “media bribes have been almost eradicated... Today those who take payments are an endangered species. Nobody controls the media in this country anymore ... For years, the media feared the government would lift its radio-TV concessions or its lucrative print advertising. No longer.” (p. 50) An official at Edelman Public Relations Worldwide “says Mexico’s news media are becoming more professional. ‘We see many new, young and serious-minded professionals pursuing journalism, especially covering business and technology.’” (Long, 2004, p. 51) According to Long (2004), a Fleishman-Hillard executive observes further that “younger Mexicans are becoming more trusting of the media, and reporters and editors are learning how to use the freedoms they acquired with the end of authoritarian rule. It is a given ... that the public will gain from a better-informed media.” (p. 51)

Nevertheless, the general lack of trust of institutions prevalent in many countries throughout Latin America – often the result of a history of political and private sector mismanagement – runs against genuine corporate efforts to establish successful relationships with key publics. Moreover, public disenchantment with institutions also undermines the legitimacy of governments and weakens popular support for democracy in Latin America. A regional poll conducted in April-May 2002 by Cima-Barometro Iberoamericano – which includes several Gallup affiliates – reports popular support below 30 percent for a majority of Latin American presidents; moreover, according to the survey, “political parties are equally

discredited," with public trust of these institutions generally under 20 percent. (Oppenheimer, 2002b, p. 7A) The results echo a Latinobarometro 2001 poll that revealed a drop from 60 to 48 percent in support for democracy across the region; in some countries, such as El Salvador and Brazil, only 25 percent and 30 percent polled in those respective countries thought that "democracy was preferable to any other kind of government," with the most trusted institutions being the Church (76%) and television (70%). (Oppenheimer, 2000, 2001c) Not surprisingly, disenchanted citizens often choose not to vote in national elections. Voter turnout in presidential and congressional elections throughout the region within the past few years has been abysmal. Abstention rates have ranged from 61 percent (1999 presidential elections in El Salvador and Guatemala) to 42 percent (2001 congressional elections in Argentina) to 40 percent (2002 presidential elections in Costa Rica) to 34 percent (2001 presidential elections in Honduras), "produc[ing] politically weak presidents that have a hard time governing." (Oppenheimer, 2002a, p. 11a)

When operating in environments characterized by public disenchantment with and distrust of institutions, multinational companies must make an especially concerted effort to close that gap and begin building trust. For without trust, their messages will not be believed, and their communication and operational efforts are likely to fail. As Canary and Spitzberg (1984) contend, public relations will be successful to the degree that the organization and publics trust one another, agree on who has rightful power to influence, experience satisfaction with each other and commit oneself to one another. Indeed, as Grunig and Huang (2000) explain:

Trust is the characteristic that allows organizations to exist – trust by shareholders, employees, consumers, governments, and communities, for example. Without trust, stockholders will not buy stock, employees will not work, consumers will not buy products, and governments will interfere with the organization's mission. (p. 29)

That statement is most relevant to Latin America, particularly given the history of multinational corporations in the region. Latin America has been economically important for the U.S. since the early 1800s when U.S. merchants began trading with Argentina and Brazil, and the region accounted for 19 percent of U.S. exports and 22 percent of its imports. (Luer and Tilson, 1996, Tilson and Newsom, 2001) Today, according to U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, "Latin America is the fastest growing region in the world for U.S. exports," which, growing at twice the rate of any other region, have tripled in 10 years. (Tilson and Newsom, 2001, p. 35) Nevertheless, such "progress" has not been well received by all in the region. Resentment against foreign companies, particularly U.S. firms, and against the U.S. in general is deep-seated and long-standing. According to Roberto Campos, former president of Brazil, such hostility toward the U.S. stems from a history of "geographic mutilation ... armed intervention and occupation ... political intervention ... and economic domination." (Gunther, 1966, pp. 144-145) U.S. corporate abuses, for example, have ranged from the early twentieth-century "banana empires" of the United Fruit Company and the Standard Fruit Company – "that wielded immense power in the countries where they operated [Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica], oftentimes to the detriment of the local citizenry (Rodriguez, 1965, p. 103)—to U.S. oil companies and other interests that dominated Guatemala during the mid-1950s to present-day scandals of IBM (alleged bribery and fraud involving government contracts in the late 1990s) and of Ford Motor Company in Argentina (alleged collaboration with the military's "dirty war" clean-up of dissidents in the 1970s). (Tilson, 1999) In sum, Gunther (1996) observes that:

the sheer, overwhelming physical, economic and emotional weight of United States power ... the extent of our wealth, our influence, our prestige is suffocating ... . Oligarchs and



landowners who, in the last analysis, control policy in most hemisphere countries are as a rule closely intermeshed with North American business interests ... The largest criticism from most Latin Americans ... is that ... we tend to support the status quo ... which means identifying ourselves with older, standpat forces, instead of aligning with or actively supporting movements for popular reform (pp. 146-147).

When dealing with such complex environments, it's critical that multinationals differentiate themselves in their conduct and in their communication. However, if the prevalent thinking is that institutions are dishonest, being good is not enough. Foreign companies need to communicate their philosophy to their publics and prove it with actions.

### **Background**

BellSouth operates cellular communications companies in 10 Latin American countries (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela). In each of these countries, it faces not only tough competition but also regulatory decisions that impact the company's ability to succeed in these markets.



Initial research in these countries indicated that BellSouth needed to find a way to give a soul to its corporate brand by demonstrating a commitment to the local communities.

In the Southeastern U.S. where BellSouth has its home base, the BellSouth brand is easily associated with community involvement. The company's support of the community dates back to its very origins with the former Bell System and today it is managed through the BellSouth Foundation, an endowed trust of BellSouth Corporation devoted to education in the South. Since its creation in 1986, the Foundation has funded more than 595 grants and operated numerous special initiatives, with a total investment of more than \$56 million as of 2003. Through the Foundation, BellSouth supports innovative educational projects that integrate technology in the classroom, foster the education of minorities and help teachers update their knowledge to meet the educational needs of students in the twenty-first century. The Foundation's focus on education stems from the company's belief that its future success depends on having an educated base of consumers that can use its services, as well as an educated workforce pool from which to hire employees who can develop and deliver leading-edge telecommunications services.

However, while BellSouth had earned a reputation in the U.S. for its community mindedness, in Latin America, where it is a recent arrival, there was no such connotation even though its affiliated companies contributed to numerous causes in their respective markets – albeit without a cohesive strategy. Research indicated that merely stating that the company had a proven track record in community involvement in the U.S. was not enough to extend the reputation to the region. It became obvious that BellSouth needed to demonstrate its commitment in Latin America with actual deeds. To do so, the company decided to create a regional community relations program for Latin America that was consistent with the focus on education that was characteristic of its corporate giving in the U.S.

### **Goals and Objectives of the Campaign**

BellSouth's goal was to position itself as a socially responsible investor in Latin America and a partner in the long-term development of the countries in which it operates. To reach that goal, the company decided to create a regional community relations plan for Latin America that would:

- Demonstrate the company's commitment to the communities it serves by addressing a real social need.

- Help establish trust with its target audiences in Latin America, such as government and opinion leaders, the media and the public in general by proving its intent to become a true partner in the development of the social infrastructure of the community.

- Position BellSouth as a leader in corporate responsibility in that region by showing the way for other investors to become involved.

- Group the social responsibility efforts of its 10 Latin American operations toward one single cause that the company could "own" region-wide, thus building enough critical mass to generate an impact among its key publics.

- Create a program that would provide numerous opportunities for public relations and relationship-building activities.

Many causes were considered for possible sponsorship, such as popular sports in Latin America (soccer and baseball), mental health issues, drug abuse and the arts. In the end, however, and after considering the pros and cons of all the alternatives, BellSouth decided to focus on the education of Latin America's working children.

There were a number of reasons behind that decision. First, many U.S.-based employees traveling to Latin America had noticed the high number of children who appeared to be working instead of going to school and had voiced their concerns to company executives.

Secondary research on the issue showed that there are an estimated 21 million working children in Latin America, with ages ranging from 3 and 4 up to their teens, which makes this a most-pressing social need. The definition of “working children” merits clarification. These are not students making a little spending money by working a few hours as baby sitters and mowing lawns after school as is common practice in the U.S. The working children of Latin America cannot attend school at all because they need to help their families by working full time selling flowers and gum on the streets, shining shoes, working in the fields, serving as full-time domestic help and often engaging in more dangerous activities. Not only is this a great loss for the children but also for the region at large. Children who enter adulthood without a basic education will not be able to become full contributors to society. Worse yet, as working children become adults without realizing the benefit of an education, they typically send their own children to work, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty and illiteracy. This has a long-term impact not only for the region but also for the companies and institutions whose future success depends on the wellbeing of the communities where they operate.

A macro-look at the problem of poverty in the region underscores the concern. According to the World Bank, the number of poor in Latin America has grown from 136 million in 1986 to 180 million. (Oppenheimer, 2001a) Of further concern is the increasing concentration of wealth in the region. According to Tilson and Rockwell (2004), “the United Nations’ *Human Development Report 2001* details severe disparities in income, with the richest 20 percent of the population earning a disproportionate share as compared with the poorest 20 percent.” (p. 414) In general, Latin America “has the widest gap between rich and poor in the world, with the richest 20 percent having 30 times the income of the poorest 20 percent. (Oppenheimer 2001b, cited in Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414) According to the Inter-American Development Bank’s *Development Beyond Economics 2000* study, the region’s average per-capita income has declined from 50 percent to 30 percent of the average in the developed world since 1950. (Bussey 2000, cited in Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414) More poignantly, three countries – Haiti, Guatemala, and Nicaragua – rank lowest in the hemisphere on the United Nation’s Human Development Index, which is based on a number of social indicators, including per-capita income, school attendance, literacy rates and life expectancy. (Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414)

Moreover, the Inter-American Development Bank study indicates that privileged classes that rule such societies do little to support public policies necessary to provide vital social services to the poor. (Oppenheimer 2001b, cited in Tilson and Rockwell, 2004, p. 414) An earlier Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) report corroborates the inequities in economic development and places the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of public institutions – government administrations, justice systems and electoral bodies; as Ricardo Hausmann, IDB chief economist noted, “Latin American countries have problems with the rule of law, corruption and the ineffectiveness of government.” (Bussey 2000, cited in Tilson, 2004, p. 39) According to Tilson (2004), a 2001 Summit of the Americas report spread the responsibility yet farther afield indicating that “foreign and domestic corporations in Latin America do little to promote the welfare of employees or the local community. The report urges corporations to proactively work with host governments to institute private-sector initiatives to improve social conditions.” (p. 41)

As the search began for a regional community relations program, BellSouth's Ecuador affiliate put forth for possible region wide implementation a program it had just started in partnership with the INNFA (Instituto Nacional de la Infancia y la Familia), precisely to help working children in that country to receive an education.

Additional research by BellSouth revealed moreover that Latin America's working children were an "orphan issue": that is, no company had adopted their plight as its main focus of social responsibility. In fact, in many countries, the problem of working children had remained unattended until BellSouth addressed it.

Finally, the issue of the education of working children was in line with BellSouth's focus for corporate philanthropy which, through the BellSouth Foundation, had focused its giving on education. Thus, the schooling of working children in Latin America seemed to be a natural extension of its corporate philosophy.

All the above factors indicated that BellSouth could effectively position itself as a regional leader in social responsibility by focusing its efforts on the education of Latin America's working children. From a public relations point of view, such a program could serve to visibly demonstrate its long-term interest in the improvement of the Latin America community, thus addressing the concerns of the company's key publics: the local governments, opinion leaders, media and the public in general.

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

Communications efforts are wasted unless the target audience grasps the message that the organization intended to deliver. Unfortunately, that is easier said than done, particularly when it comes to philanthropy. Many a program is wasted in ambiguous communications. To prevent that, BellSouth deliberately designed its program around a very clear concept: it would address the needs of working children by providing small scholarships (covering tuition, uniform, school supplies, transportation, tutoring and extracurricular activities as well as family counseling) so that they could return to school. Scholarships would be small, ranging from \$100 to \$400 per year per child, depending on the country.

The program was funded with a \$6 million commitment over five years (\$3 million from BellSouth Foundation, matched with another \$3 million from BellSouth's 10 Latin American operations.) This was the first time in its history that the BellSouth Foundation made a donation outside the United States. In fact, the Foundation had to amend its own statutes in order to expand the company's philanthropy to foreign markets.

Program credibility is also critical. BellSouth knew that it needed to partner with social and educational experts to ensure that the program had the needed credibility and a good chance of success. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were carefully screened and selected in each country to administer BellSouth Proniño on a day-to-day basis. On an ongoing basis, the BellSouth Foundation audits the NGOs, as well as the actual programs, to ensure compliance with the program guidelines.

The program was announced in 2000 as a regional initiative of BellSouth and launched in each country at the beginning of 2001, coinciding with the start of the school year. In Latin America, the school year typically follows the calendar year: it starts during the first quarter and ends in the third quarter. Interestingly, in some countries such as Argentina, where even discussing the subject of working children had been a social taboo, the actual launch was preceded by an educational campaign to raise public awareness of the plight of working children.

BellSouth Proniño is managed by the public relations manager/director in each country, thus making an important link between its philanthropic and public relations aspects. Media, government officials, and business and opinion leaders are invited to attend events planned in the schools around festivities, donations and volunteer activities, thus further increasing awareness of the program and attention to the cause it addresses.

BellSouth made Proniño its flagship community relations program for Latin America. That meant that every BellSouth affiliate could be part of a large regional initiative (10-country, five-year, \$6-million), giving each of them the weight to stand out in their communities and have an impact.

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>CHILDREN ENROLLED*</b>	<b>NGO (Non-government organization managing the program for BellSouth Proniño)</b>
<b>Argentina</b>	1,725	Asociación Conciencia
<b>Chile</b>	234	Consejo de Defensa del Niño
<b>Colombia</b>	1,815	Fundación Mario Santo Domingo
<b>Ecuador</b>	664	Fundación Grupo Esquel Fundación Derecho de los Niños
<b>Guatemala</b>	900	Fundación para el Desarrollo Rural (FunRural)
<b>Nicaragua</b>	555	Save The Children USA
<b>Panama</b>	300	Casa Esperanza
<b>Peru</b>	1,898	Centro de Estudios Sociales y Publicaciones (CESIP)
<b>Uruguay</b>	275	Asociación Civil Gurises Unidos
<b>Venezuela</b>	260	Asociación Ayuda a un Niño
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>8,626 children enrolled - 10 countries participating</b>	

*\*As of January 2004*

## **Results Achieved**

BellSouth Proniño has fully met the overall goal of positioning the company as a socially responsible investor in Latin America and a partner in the long-term development of the countries in which it operates. By effectively delivering on its promise (i.e., sponsoring the education of working children), it demonstrates BellSouth's commitment to its Latin American host communities and makes BellSouth a model U.S. multinational in the area of corporate social responsibility.

The program also has become very effective in terms of establishing relationships with key audiences. Company executives can point to the program to demonstrate BellSouth's partnership with the countries in which it operates. It has become particularly helpful in establishing relationships with Latin America's new generation of leaders, who welcome initiatives from the private sector to help them address the needs of their countries' underprivileged social segments.

As a public relations tool, the program offers endless opportunities to reach the company's publics via events, press conferences, talks with opinion leaders, visits to schools, etc. Advertising and social marketing campaigns have been launched not only to promote the program and BellSouth's role in it but also to draw attention to the problem of working children.

Importantly, the program has strengthened the relationship with one of the company's most important publics: its own employees. That has resulted not only in the sense of pride that results from working for a socially responsible company but also in terms of volunteerism. Volunteer

initiatives have been created in most of the countries, allowing employees to donate time and money (through payroll deduction) to help BellSouth Proniño.

### **Recognition**

BellSouth Proniño has received a lot of recognition precisely from the types of associations and institutions it was created to address.

In 2002, it was recognized by the Trust Fund of the Organization of American States with an honorable mention.

Since its inception, BellSouth Proniño has received recognition and assistance from the South American headquarters of the International Labor Organization's International Programme for the Eradication of Child Labour (IPEC) in Lima. BellSouth Proniño has received recognition from Latin American government officials, including Peru's president Toledo, as well as the first ladies of Nicaragua and Colombia.

In November of 2002, Argentina's American Chamber selected BellSouth Proniño as the top corporate community project in that country.

BellSouth Proniño is one of the programs of Fundación Telcel, the philanthropic arm of BellSouth's Venezuela affiliate, Telcel-BellSouth. Fundación Telcel was selected as Venezuela's top philanthropic organization in 2002.

In Panama, BellSouth Proniño was awarded the prestigious EDUCO award in 2002 from the Private Sector Council for Educational Assistance.

In December 2003, it was selected by the American Chamber of Commerce in Guatemala as the community relations program of the year.

In December 2003, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell recognized BellSouth Panama for its BellSouth Proniño program.

Additionally, the program has received recognition from other groups.

In September 2003, the program received a first place award in the Community Relations category of the Platinum PR Awards competition, sponsored by PR News. It also received an honorable mention by the same organization under the Global PR category.

In June 2003, BellSouth Proniño received a Special Recognition Award from the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

### **Success Factors**

BellSouth Proniño's success, both as a community relations program and as a public relations strategy, can be attributed to a number of factors.

First and foremost, it *addresses a very real and visible need*: the education of working children. Children are endearing, and most people will relate to an institution that endeavors to address a social problem that affects children.

Second, unlike many philanthropic programs that focus on ambiguous and loosely defined initiatives, BellSouth Proniño *is built around a very simple and clear concept*, one that can be summarized in one sentence and delivered easily as a key message: “*BellSouth Proniño is a regional initiative of BellSouth designed to help working children in Latin America receive an education by providing them with small scholarships covering tuition, books and supplies, uniforms, transportation, tutoring, meals and counseling.*” A clear statement of program objectives is critical in ensuring that the organization’s key publics understand what is being done and see it as an action that addresses a social concern that is relevant to them.

Third, BellSouth was *able to narrowly define a very specific need* that no one had addressed before and, in so doing, it positioned itself as the leader in addressing the issue. In fact, in some countries, as was the case in Argentina where the topic of working children had been swept under the rug, the company started the program with a communication plan to raise awareness about the problem.

Fourth, in a region where government leaders are expected to solve huge social problems, the involvement by a multinational in addressing one of them is greatly appreciated. In public relations terms, this becomes an example of *two-way communication and relationship building*.

Fifth, as a public relations tactic, BellSouth Proniño offers *endless opportunities for public relations activities* which create opportunities for the company to increase awareness among its target publics of both the need to help working children and its social responsibility role in the solution.

Finally, BellSouth Proniño is a source of pride for company employees, particularly in a part of the world where corporate responsibility is more the exception than the norm. Consequently, BellSouth Proniño becomes an effective relationship building tool with one *of the company’s key publics: its own employees*. In many countries, that has resulted in requests for opportunities to get involved, which have been harnessed into a volunteer program. Company employees and their families support the program via donations of time and money, thus enriching the program and helping communicate the effort to outside audiences.

## Conclusion

As a region in transition, Latin America presents a number of challenges for foreign multinationals needing to conduct high quality, effective and honest public relations. The public’s lack of trust of institutions, in particular, is an obstacle to establishing mutually beneficial relationships with key publics.

With its regional community relations program, BellSouth has been able to succeed in generating trust and positioning itself as a leader in corporate responsibility.

The return on the program has been excellent, considering that BellSouth Proniño was funded by re-allocating existing budgets. BellSouth’s Latin American companies are able to be a part of a much larger, regional project allowing them to position themselves as leaders of corporate responsibility throughout Latin America. In a larger sense, BellSouth Proniño points the way for other corporations and their public relations counsel to follow. In the final analysis, as Tilson (2004) notes:

Corporate responsibility should be a priority for public relations professionals who counsel top management, and good citizenship an integral part of every strategic public relations plan. In so doing, the profession not only can best serve its interests and those of its employers but also can help transform societies into ones that are civil, ethical, and equitable for all peoples. (p. 41)

## TEACHING NOTE

### Overview

The BellSouth Proniño case gives students an opportunity to discuss both the challenges and expectations that multinational companies face in host countries/regions. To successfully launch its cellular communication business operations in Latin America, BellSouth needed not only to create a brand image but also to develop mutually beneficial, long-term relationships with a range of key publics including government officials, regulators, the media, opinion leaders, customers and the general public. Company executives realized that, given the historic distrust of institutions and particularly of multinationals in the region, they had to visibly demonstrate a long-term commitment as a socially responsible investor and partner in the wellbeing of the communities in which BellSouth operated. Positioning itself as a socially responsible company would “give a soul to the brand,” create and sustain important relationships with key publics on whom its success depended, and, most important, contribute to the overall development of communities in which BellSouth had a long-term self-interest.

### Questions for Discussion

Students can approach the case study from a variety of perspectives (e.g., the point of view of the company, consumers, the media and host governments) using the following questions to guide their analysis and prompt class discussion:

*What cultural, social, political, and economic factors in the Latin American environment affected BellSouth’s decision to initiate a program of social responsibility?* This allows the class to discuss the historical record of multinational corporations in Latin America and, more broadly, in developing countries around the world. Attention should be given to the impact of public opinion, rising expectations and the influence of the mass media both in host countries and at home upon corporate decision-making.

*What are the pros and cons of initiating a corporate program of social responsibility?* Students should explore both the internal and external advantages and disadvantages of creating BellSouth Proniño specifically and community programs in general. For example, what corporate staffing requirements are necessary? What are the budgetary concerns that must be addressed? How is the program to be implemented in the host country? Who will monitor the program, and how should its effectiveness be evaluated? What benefits should the company expect from its investment in the program? What should be done if the program does not live up to corporate or public expectations?

*What are some of the key publics, or constituencies, affected by BellSouth’s decision?* Several of the most important audiences are outlined in the case study, but all are not. What others must the company consider (e.g., investors, activist non-government organizations and home-country media)? How should the company rank its key publics in order of importance, and how will those rankings affect its decisions? What research should the company do on these publics before making a decision on a program of social responsibility?

*How successful was BellSouth’s corporate communication plan?* Students should examine the company’s overall strategy as well as its specific tactics (e.g., press conferences) that were used to launch BellSouth Proniño and to publicize it subsequently. What were the advantages and disadvantages of selecting a social issue that could be used as a “full-scope” initiative? Was the plan comprehensive enough to reach all of the company’s key



publics? Were there any important constituencies that the case study did not discuss in terms of the corporate communication plan? If so, how might the company best reach these publics? How did BellSouth use “integrated communication” (i.e., advertising, marketing, and public relations) collectively to communicate with its publics?

*What effect has BellSouth Proniño had on the company and its key publics?* Given the company’s overall business and public relations goals, has the program been effective in helping BellSouth accomplish what it wanted to achieve? How well has BellSouth Proniño been received specifically by: the media, consumers, government officials, and employees? What evidence is there of that? Students also should discuss the long-term implications of the program on local communities and society at large. What’s the next step for BellSouth Proniño?

### **You are the Director**

Assume that you have been promoted to public relations director for a theoretical BellSouth International – Africa. Company executives have asked you to expand BellSouth Proniño to the countries on that continent in which the company operates. Discuss how you would proceed in replicating the program and what challenges you might face in doing so. What lessons can you learn from the company’s experiences in Latin America? What changes would you make in the program to adapt to the social, political, cultural and economic environment in Africa?

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**Preparing for Full Stewardship:  
A Public Information Campaign for the Panama Canal**

**Maria E. Len-Rios  
Georgia Southern University  
United States**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
and the International Public Relations Association, [www.ipra.org](http://www.ipra.org)

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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

The Panama Canal is extremely important to the economy of the Republic of Panama, and thus to the residents of the country. Revenues from the Panama Canal in fiscal year 1996 were \$486 million, with \$105 million of that revenue for the Panama government<sup>1</sup>. The Panama Canal also is one of the wonders of the world and a valuable historical feat as well as an important tourist attraction for the country.

Since completion of the Canal in 1914, the United States has owned and operated the waterway. The Panama Canal Treaty of Sept. 7, 1977, implemented on Oct. 1, 1979, mandates that the United States transfer full stewardship of the Panama Canal to the Republic of Panama on Dec. 31, 1999. To properly administer and operate the Panama Canal, the Panamanian people must learn about and understand this diverse and complex organization: its historical context, its growing involvement with advancing technology and its importance as a focal point for Panama's growing maritime industry.

This case study examines a public information campaign from February through November 1996, sponsored by the Panama Canal Commission's Office of Public Affairs and the Panama Ministry of Education to make Panamanian schoolchildren more aware of this important waterway and to prepare them to be part of its work force. Some of the challenges of the campaign were designing the appropriate materials for the multimedia capabilities (or lack thereof) of the classrooms of this largely underdeveloped country and targeting the message for a variety of age levels.

## **The Problem**

The Panama Canal Commission (PCC), an executive agency of the U.S. government operating on a break-even basis, was established by the 1979 Panama Canal Treaty to oversee the smooth transition of the Panama Canal to the Republic of Panama at noon on Dec. 31, 1999. As part of the Canal transition process and the PCC's *Milestone Plan for the Transition of the Panama Canal*, a public information campaign was devised in February of 1996 to prepare Panamanian youth to participate effectively in decisions that will be made about the future of the Canal, as well as in its management and operation. It also was designed to provide an accurate history of the construction of the Canal which had been "politicized" in part.

"An important goal of the public relations efforts of the Panama Canal Commission is to educate the citizens of Panama about the history of the Canal," said Willie K. Friar, PCC director of public affairs, "and to encourage them to take pride in operating the waterway in the same highly efficient manner which has been a tradition since it first opened to international commerce."

This was an opportunity for the PCC to send a message to the children and educators of

Panama that the Canal is important to the country, historically, politically, and economically; that it requires care and maintenance; and that it provides many varied job opportunities. For the Canal to continue to function effectively, it is important that the Canal retain a dedicated and trained work force, maintain its managerial and financial autonomy, develop relationships with surrounding communities, and be preserved by the Panamanian people.

## **Background**

The United States completed construction of the Panama Canal in 1914, and has owned and operated the Canal ever since. Until 1979, this was done within the confines of the Panama Canal Zone, a strip of land 50 miles long, the length of the Canal, and 10 miles wide, 5 miles on either side of the waterway. The Canal had traditionally employed experts primarily from the United States and a few others from other countries in its management and administrative positions. The relationship between the U.S. employees and Panamanian communities was not particularly close but was somewhat complex: it wasn't common for Panamanians to anticipate pursuing a position working for the Canal.

In 1979, with the implementation of the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977, the PCC was created to carry out the mandates of the Treaty and to assure a smooth transition and transfer of the Canal to Panamanian hands on Dec. 31, 1992. During the 20-year treaty transition period, some of the PCC's local objectives have been to increase the Panamanian work force, educate the citizens of Panama about the Canal and publicize the opportunities it offers the country. This not only has created ties between the community and the PCC, but has helped the community understand and identify with the needs of the Canal and see how they will benefit from a well-run Canal.

The PCC's education program also is in accordance with its objective of providing continued excellent service to its customers--the international maritime industry. Over the years, the PCC has built a reputation with the world's shipping industry of the Canal as a cost-effective, safe and efficient shipping route. As the work force has shifted from primarily a U.S. citizen-dominated management team and work force to 92 percent Panamanian in 1997, the shipping industry has continued to maintain confidence in the dedication and professionalism of the Canal's employees.<sup>3</sup> To ensure that Panama is able to maintain this traditional shipping industry confidence, it is essential that Panamanians understand Canal operations and become aware of and interested in training for positions with the Canal. Many of the positions are unique to Canal operations and require extensive training and preparation. With Panama's relatively small labor pool population of approximately 2.6 million,<sup>4</sup> it is in the interest of the Canal to have as large a segment of the population as possible educated about and aware of the employment possibilities and requirements.

The PCC currently employs more than 9,000 employees, 7,500 of them permanent and full-time, the rest temporary workers hired during maintenance of the Canal locks. Types of

occupations needed include: ship pilots, launch operators, line handlers, locks operators, machinists, lathe operators, carpenters, electricians, tugboat operators, dredge operators, drilling and blasting experts, engineers, hydrologists, job trainers, computer operators and lawyers.

Also of vital importance to the Canal is the country's knowledge of how important the water supply is to Canal operations. This is especially important for residents of communities near the area of the Panama Canal watershed, which is the source for freshwater from rainfall in the surrounding mountains. The Canal uses water to raise and lower ships in the Canal locks, to create a high-level lake that allows ships to transit at 85 feet above sea level, and to generate the hydroelectric power that runs the Canal locomotives and other equipment. It is essential for the public to know that the Canal cannot function without proper control and maintenance of an abundant water supply.

From informal research, the PCC Office of Public Affairs knew that the Panamanian school system taught about the Panama Canal from a sometimes inaccurate historical perspective, and that information on job opportunities, Canal operations and maintenance of the waterway were largely untouched in the curriculum.

The Office of Public Affairs designed a program of Educational materials about the Canal for the Panamanian schools and presented it to the PCC's Board of Directors, who were highly enthusiastic about the project.<sup>5</sup> The project was then coordinated in conjunction with the Panama Ministry of Education to target Panamanian students and teachers in the public and private primary and secondary educational institutions.

The education system of Panama is divided into primary and secondary education. Primary education is generally for students ages six through 12, and secondary education is generally for students ages 13 through 19. According to the Office of Statistics of the Panama Ministry of Education, as of 1996 there were 371,250 students enrolled in institutions offering primary education and 221,022 in secondary education.<sup>6</sup> Figures from 1996 also showed that on the national level, there were 2,847 primary schools and 404 secondary schools. These schools and students were the target audience for this campaign.

The media outlets used for publicity about the program were local television news programs, Panamanian newspapers, an internally produced television informational series for local television and the PCC's internal employee newspaper.

There was a limited budget for this project, and most of the materials were produced in-house and by low-bid contractors through the U.S. Government Printing Office. The total cost of the program was approximately \$200,000 U.S.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The primary goals of the campaign were to teach the Panamanian youth and educators about (1) how the Canal operates and what is required to maintain it, (2) the benefits the Canal provides to the country, and (3) the types of jobs available at the Canal. This was one means identified in the transition milestone plan to ensure the successful operation of the Canal after its turnover.

Other goals of the campaign were the reinforcement of community ties between PCC and the Panamanian public, making PCC education a required part of educational programs nationwide and aiding in the transition of the Canal from U.S. control to Panamanian stewardship under Panama Canal Authority on Dec. 31, 1999.

## **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

For this public information campaign, the tactics and techniques used were divided into two areas: (1) educational materials and (2) program publicity. Coordination with the Ministry of Education determined the number of each kind of educational package needed to send to the public and private schools in the Republic of Panama.<sup>7</sup> Materials were to be kept in school libraries and checked out by teachers for classroom use.

## **Educational Materials**

Instruction packages, all in Spanish, were targeted to three particular student age levels and to each school's ability to access multimedia technology. In an initial meeting on Feb. 22, 1996, members of the PCC's Office of Public Affairs met with representatives of the Ministry of Education, teachers and members of local television education Channel 11 operated by the University of Panama. Prototypes of educational materials designed by the PCC's Graphics Branch were presented. The teachers reviewed the materials and expressed satisfaction with the appropriateness of the materials for the various age levels of the audience. Suggestions were also made.

The local TV Channel 11 was included in the meeting because its educational format and national transmission coverage made it a good medium for showing the educational videos to reach a nationwide television audience. The Channel 11 station representative agreed to start showing the videos as soon as they were available.

To reach the target audience, the PCC created two videos "Que es un Canal?" (What is a Canal?) and "Vistazo Rapido al Canal de Panama" (A Quick Look at the Panama Canal). The former was produced for primary school students in Panama (U.S. grades one through six) and the latter for the secondary school students (U.S. grades seven through twelve).

The video for the primary school students used two young Panamanian students as actors visiting different sites along the Canal route. The video begins with a young boy asleep in bed



with a book about the Canal open in his arms. It then moves to a dream where he and a young girl actually visit the areas he was “reading” about. The language in the video is also adapted to appeal to the children’s age level. The video for secondary school children does not use actors and contains more detailed and technical information on the workings of the Canal and the different functions of the employees who operate the waterway.

Some of the schools did not have videocassette players and were provided a set of 40 slides with an explanation booklet. “Subir, Atravesar y Bajar” (Up, Over, and Down) was created for the primary schools, “Un Vistazo Rapido al Canal de Panama” (A Quick Look at the Panama Canal) was created for the secondary students, and “El Canal de Panama: Una Vision Historica” (The Panama Canal: A Historic Look) presented the history of the waterway for older students and instructors. The slides were numbered in order of the presentation and also were accompanied by two posters, a Canal profile and a locks photograph.

For schools in the interior or rural areas of the country, where there is no audiovisual capability or electricity, a set of illustrated flip charts, based on the slides, were created, again according to age level. Each 11 x 17 inch flip chart was designed to sit upright on a flat surface and was attached in order of presentation by a three-ring binder type enclosure. Each of the charts contained 40 illustrations. The photos or illustrations were placed on the front of the poster cards, and the text for the teachers to explain the illustrations was placed on the back of the previous card; so as one card is showing, the teacher can read the corresponding text on the back of the card. Except for historical photos taken during early Canal construction days, the flip chart illustrations and photographs were in full color to help maintain the attention of the students.

The materials for the children in primary schools included definitions of terms used in Canal operations. For example, students were taught that when a ship goes through the Canal from ocean to ocean, that is called a Canal *transit*. These materials explain the Canal by describing the process of a ship transiting the Canal.

Secondary schoolchildren were provided more detailed information and diagrams. Students were told more about the history of the country as it relates to the current operations of the Canal. For example, students were taught that the construction of the Canal was finished before its scheduled completion date, and under budget. Secondary students are also reminded of the involvement of the French in Canal construction and in completion of the Panama Railroad by a U.S. contractor in 1855.

“El Canal de Panama: Una Vision Historica” (The Panama Canal: A Historic Look) was the flip chart created for older students and focuses on Panamanian history as it relates to the Canal. For example, it mentions Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal in Egypt, and analyzes the many problems faced by the valiant French engineer in the late 1800s

when trying to build a canal through the Isthmus of Panama with malaria, yellow fever, inadequate equipment and finances. The explanation of operations is also presented from a historical perspective illustrating how machinery was designed to operate by a combination of hydroelectric and thermal power when water levels were low.

A total of 600 videos (300 of each version), 900 slide briefings of 40 slides each (300 of each version), 900 full color flip charts (300 of each version) with posters, a profile of the Canal, and 350,000 black and white general information Canal brochures were produced by PCC and distributed by the Panama Ministry of Education. Special requests were accommodated for videos from secondary schools' foreign language departments.<sup>8</sup>

The materials were created to be used over the years. To ensure the longevity of the materials, packaging was designed for durability and to preserve materials for long-term repeated use.<sup>9</sup>

### **Program Publicity**

Program publicity consisted of two special events, video news releases, photograph and outline releases, feature stories in PCC internal and external publications and on its television programs, and special airings of the educational videos on Panama Channel 11.

The first event was the presentation of the educational materials by the Panama Canal Commission's Administrator and Deputy Administrator to Panama's Vice Minister of Education. This was hosted by the Panama Canal Commission in the warehouse where the materials were packaged to be shipped. The two children who acted in the primary school video were also on hand. PCC's Office of Public Affairs covered the event and released a Spanish-version video news release (VNR) for Panama's television channels 2, 4, 5, 11, and 13. The English-version VNR was produced for the Armed Forces Radio and Television Station's (AFRTS) Channels 8 and 10. AFRTS Channels 8 and 10 serve the local U.S. military community, but also are viewed by many English-speaking (bilingual) West Indian descendants of Canal construction-era workers as well as local Panamanians.

The Panama Ministry of Education was responsible for the distribution of the materials to the public and private schools. The Vice Minister of Education held a special event on Oct. 17 to distribute flags to all schools to commemorate Panama's national holiday,<sup>10</sup> and the PCC Office of Public Affairs seized the occasion as an opportunity to disseminate the materials to the public schools. A representative from PCC's Office of Public Affairs was present to explain the materials. Representatives from 13 geographical areas, including Panama's nine provinces and the San Blas region, received materials and were designated to distribute them within their regions.<sup>11</sup>

A separate PCC ceremony was held on Oct. 22 for the presentation of materials to the

private schools, with representatives from the National Association of Catholic Schools and the National Union of Private Schools which represents non-Catholic private schools.

The second event sponsored by the PCC, at the Panama Canal Miraflores Locks Theater on Oct. 12, was the first of a series of orientation programs for educators who would be using the educational packages in courses about the Canal throughout the country. The orientation program covered the basic aspects of Canal management and operations. Both Spanish and English language VNRs were produced for the respective media audiences and the program also was covered in PCC's employee newspaper. This event was coordinated by the PCC with the Panama Ministry of Education.

Teachers also were encouraged to arrange for groups of students to tour the Canal's Miraflores Locks Visitors Center. Operated by the Office of Public Affairs, the Center gives visitors a close-up view of canal locks operations together with narration by expert orientation personnel, a theater presentation, a view of a typographic canal map, and a look at replicas and models of some Canal equipment, past and present.

Photo news releases focused on the first event and pictured Panama's Vice Minister of Education and the Administrator of the Panama Canal. Government ministers and the PCC Administrator are widely recognized public figures and attracted much attention in the press because of their prominence. These releases were sent to all Panamanian newspapers, including *La Prensa*, *El Panama America*, *El Siglo*, *El Universal*, *La Estrella de Panama*, *The Panama News* and *La Critica*. This coverage was used to build community ties by acknowledging PCC's goodwill towards improving the education of the community.

Other publicity included a centerfold story with photos written about the program in the biweekly Canal employee newspaper *The Spillway* and a segment in a regular feature show on the Canal produced by PCC called "Panama--Un Canal en Transision" (Panama--A Canal in Transition). The employee newspaper is often included in media kits and demonstrates the PCC's commitment to the country's citizens. It also helps to instill pride in the employees by showing them the PCC cares about their communities and country, and supports them.

## **Results**

The results of the public information campaign were measured informally by feedback from the Ministry of Education and teachers, and by growth of related education programs. Publicity was measured by the number of press clippings and informal surveys of VNR use.

Feedback from the Panama Ministry of Education and teachers was very positive. The educators said they have noticed that the students have learned more and teachers have requested

the videos in different languages to reinforce the message in foreign language classes. The materials were being used in obligatory courses about the Canal, and have been lauded for their wonderful visuals.<sup>12</sup> Also, the number of student visits to the Visitor's Center have increased.

The education of the community is an ongoing effort, and direct effects of the program are difficult to measure. But it clearly has created a demand for more educational materials. Since the inception of the program, other education programs have been developed by other divisions within the PCC and by Nestle Panami. For example, the PCC Liaison Office, in conjunction with the Office of Public Affairs, has developed an educational program aimed at the schools in the vicinity of the Canal. The program centers on the need to protect Canal equipment, especially aids to navigation, from damage and theft, and to protect the Canal watershed.

During the Universal Congress of the Panama Canal, the PCC Office of Public Affairs televised, on closed circuit television, the proceedings from the Universal Congress so students in the Panama Canal College auditorium could watch.

Also, Nestle Panama developed a booklet on the history of the Canal with the aid of the PCC. The booklet had places for illustrations, to be cut out from labels of evaporated milk cans, to paste in the booklet and form an illustrated informational book about the Canal. Entry forms for a drawing were included in the books. Those who entered could win prizes ranging from a two-bedroom home to backpacks for schoolbooks.

The combined success of these efforts ultimately will be measured by the continued excellent service provided by the Panama Canal to its clients--the international maritime community--for decades to come.

### **Notes**

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**Public Relations in the Caribbean:  
HIV/AIDS Public Information/Education Campaigns in The Bahamas**

**Juliette Storr, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Communication  
North Carolina State University  
Raleigh, North Carolina USA  
[jmstorr@social.chass.ncsu.edu](mailto:jmstorr@social.chass.ncsu.edu)**

Made possible by generous grants from  
Pharmacia, now a part of Pfizer Inc., [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)  
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The Institute for Public Relations Research and Education  
University of Florida, PO Box 118400, Gainesville, FL 32611-8400  
Phone: 352/392-0280, Fax: 352/846-1122, E-mail: [ipr@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ipr@jou.ufl.edu)

## **Executive Summary**

HIV/AIDS has reached epidemic proportions in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is the second most affected region in the world after Sub-Sahara Africa. At the present rate of acceleration more than half of the Caribbean's potential workforce may be wiped out within the next 25 years if this deadly disease is not arrested. One of the countries with the highest rate of HIV/AIDS cases in the region is the Bahamas. With the second highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in adults, the Bahamas is estimated to have a prevalence rate above 4 percent. Haiti is classified as the only more distressed country in the region with a prevalence rate above 7 percent.

In 1985, the Bahamas recorded its first AIDS case. Three years later, the Bahamian government, with the creation of its National AIDS Program (NAP), began health promotion and information campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles, educate the public about HIV/AIDS and inform people about methods of prevention. In 1988 NAP established the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat to coordinate and implement the promotion and information/education campaigns. The AIDS Secretariat serves as the national coordinating body for all information dealing with HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

Over the past 18 years the Bahamian government, through the Ministry of Health, has recorded a number of successes including a dramatic drop in mother-to-child transmission of AIDS, a decline in the overall mortality rate, an overall decrease in new persons testing HIV positive (from 700 plus in 1994 to 350 plus in 1999) and fewer than 2.0 percent of antenatal clinic clients continuing to be HIV positive. Because of these successes, the Bahamian model for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS is considered a success. (Caribbean AIDS Telecommunication Information Network)

However, despite these successes, the country still has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the English speaking Caribbean. Further, it is not known what impact the public communication (information/education) health campaigns have had on the target audience(s). Unfortunately, because of budget constraints, many of these campaigns were never evaluated. This lack of assessment continues today and has raised many questions about the effectiveness of the messages. Perhaps what is more alarming is the recent increase in HIV/AIDS among the adolescent age group, the future productive members of Bahamian society. Their lack of knowledge about the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS raises several crucial questions about campaign design and execution, benchmarking and pre-test and post-test of message design.

This case study discusses the Bahamian HIV/AIDS promotion and information/education campaigns and addresses the issues surrounding the design and implementation of public health communication campaigns in developing countries with serious health crises. The purpose of this case study is to emphasize the importance of evaluation and assessment of the messages of public information/education campaigns even when there are financial constraints and limited resources. Knowing how effective your messages are in reaching your target audience(s) could be the difference between limited successes in health campaigns like HIV/AIDS and complete eradication of these health calamities. This case study demonstrates the need to evaluate campaign messages so that limited resources are used efficiently and effectively and audience behavior and attitudes are effectively monitored. When the effect/impact of messages is not evaluated, campaign organizers limit their ability to adjust or adapt the messages for more meaningful actions from the target public.

## **The Problem**

At the recent Forum 2003 held in Nassau and sponsored by the College of the Bahamas, medical experts who work in the Bahamas in HIV/AIDS healthcare raised several areas of concern. One of the conference presenters, Dr. Percival McNeil, noted that while there had been a dramatic decrease in mother-to-infant transfer of the disease, this occurred only within the population that they came in contact with, that is, those who came to the hospitals or community clinics and took part in the MTCT (Mother-To-Child-Transmission) prevention program (approximately 150 women and 90 children living with HIV). He believes that many in the target populations were not being reached. A former director of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, Christine Campbell, agreed with his assessment.

Thus, it can be argued that the target populations did not receive or pay attention to the messages of prevention and testing and therefore did not respond to them. These concerns center on issues of message design and communication effectiveness. As Monahan notes, communication campaigns play an important role in disease prevention and health promotion. However, “designing effective campaigns about health is often a difficult task.” (Monahan)

Another area of concern is the low funding the information/education campaigns receive. In the Caribbean most of the monetary emphasis in the HIV/AIDS national programs has been placed on the care and treatment of HIV/AIDS patients with less attention to prevention. In the Caribbean, by the end of 2000, countries had spent \$162 million or 5 percent of their health budgets on public awareness and prevention, \$362 million or 11 percent on basic care, and \$2,760 million or 83 percent on highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART). (World Bank) Theodore also notes that a large percentage of funding in response to HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean goes to treatment (93 percent) while prevention only accounts for a small fraction (5 percent). The remaining 2 percent goes to research, capacity building and increasing the commitment of governments. (Theodore)

In the Bahamas the health budget is similarly allocated. The basic care program received \$69 per capita, the HAART program \$220 per capita, and the preventive program \$8 per capita. (World Bank) Thus, the most funded area of the national program is treatment and care to decrease the mortality rate of those living with HIV/AIDS.

Another aspect of the problem, as the World Bank 2001 study “HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean” notes, is the issue of underreporting. The World Bank study explains that this practice of underreporting makes it difficult to know the extent of the HIV/AIDS problem in the Caribbean. (World Bank) The Bahamas is credited with one of the better reporting systems in the region; however, there is still concern for underreporting, particularly among Haitian immigrants, many of whom are in the country illegally and could be deported if they came forward to be tested, and in Family Island rural communities.

Although there have been success stories in treatment programs such as the mother-child transmission studies conducted in the Bahamas, very little is known about the effectiveness of the HIV/AIDS public health promotion and information/education campaigns conducted by the Ministry of Health through the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat. The evaluation of health communication programs is essential as it could make a difference in lives lost to HIV/AIDS. As the Institute of Public Relations 2003 report “Guidelines for Measuring the Effectiveness of PR Programs and Activities” notes, public relations measurement and evaluation “is any and all research designed to determine the relative effectiveness or value of what is done in public relations.” (Lindenmann)



The Institute's report also notes, more specifically, "PR measurement is a way of giving a result a precise dimension, generally by comparison to some standard or baseline and usually is done in a quantifiable or numerical manner." (Lindenmann)

That the Bahamas has recorded results of success in the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS is evident; however, the communication specialists who designed and implemented the programs cannot quantifiably link these successes to the messages disseminated. Awareness of HIV/AIDS has increased throughout the country, but what does this mean? Are Bahamians more knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS, what it is and how it is transmitted? Does this awareness/knowledge affect the behavior of target populations? When public relations practitioners measure outputs, outtakes and outcomes, they "usually come up with a precise measure -- a number; for example, 1,000 brochures distributed...60,000 hits on a website...50 percent message recall...an 80 percent increase in awareness levels, etc." (Lindenmann) To date the Bahamas has not done this type of evaluation.

To measure success, the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat has done more subjective evaluation of its health information/education campaigns. According to the present director of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, Rosemae Bain, the communication campaigns were not evaluated in any significant way. (Bain) The AIDS Secretariat deduced the effectiveness of the communication campaign messages based on the NAP's overall successes: the reduction of newly reported cases, decrease in the prevalence of HIV and decrease in the number of new AIDS cases. The result of this approach leaves the Bahamian health organizers responsible for the public information/communication campaigns wanting to know the answers to questions such as the following: Did those public relations activities and/or advertising efforts that they initiated have an effect—that is, "move the needle" in the right direction—and if so, how can they support and document that from a research perspective? Did the communication activities they implemented actually change what people know, what they think and feel, and how they actually act? What impact—if any—will various public relations, marketing communications and advertising activities have on changing the public and opinion-leader awareness, understanding, retention, attitude and behavior levels? Answering questions such as these can justify the subjective results and what communicators working in the public health sectors do to prevent and treat HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas.

## **Background of the Country**

The Bahamas is an archipelago of 700 islands and cays that descend in an arc from Bimini Island in the north near the coastal state of Florida, USA to Inagua Island and Ragged Island in the south near Cuba. With a population of 300,000 unevenly distributed among 29 inhabited islands, the country has enjoyed significant political and economic growth since it gained its independence from Britain in 1973. The main population centers are Nassau, the capital city on New Providence Island, and Freeport, Grand Bahama. The remaining islands are referred to as the "Family Islands." More than 60 percent of the population lives in Nassau, and more than 95 percent of the population lives on just seven of the islands.

The major industry, tourism, has used public relations tools and strategies since its inception in the Bahamas in the 1800s. From early publicity campaigns to public information campaigns to current uses of two-way symmetric and asymmetric public relations strategies, the profession has evolved in the Bahamas with a pattern similar to the United States. However, one of the major differences in its development pattern is the use of public relations first by British colonial administrators throughout the colonial period and later by government agencies like the

Bahamas Development Board and the Ministry of Tourism. More than three million tourists visit these islands annually. Most of the tourists who visit the country come from the United States; therefore the Bahamas is economically reliant on the United States.

Beyond tourist revenues, the country also has thriving banking and e-commerce industries. Other industries include cement, oil refining and transshipment, salt, rum, aragonite, pharmaceuticals and spiral-welded steel pipe. Fifty percent of the labor force works in the tourist industry, 40 percent in other services, 5 percent in industry and 5 percent in agriculture. With a literacy rate of 95.5 percent, this former British colony has a constitutional parliamentary democracy. The country has a population that is 85 percent black, 12 percent white, and 3 percent Asian and Hispanic. The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita is \$17,000. Tourism accounts for more than 60 percent of the GDP. (CIA) The Bahamas is ranked high according to the United Nations Human Development Index and is one of the countries in the region at the highest stage of demographic transition—a process of population change consisting of a gradual evolution from high birth and death rates to low ones. (UN) The urbanization process is very advanced.

There is mixed media ownership in the Bahamas. Print media have always been an exclusively private enterprise. The government of the Bahamas owned and controlled the electronic media—radio and television—until 1992. Today there are three major dailies and one weekly newspaper in Nassau, the capital city: the *Nassau Guardian*, which has the largest circulation 17,000; the *Nassau Tribune*, with 16,000 circulation; the *Bahama Journal* with 3,000 circulation, and the weekly tabloid, the *Punch*. Freeport, the second largest city in the island chain, has one daily newspaper—*Freeport News*, which is owned by the *Nassau Guardian*. Several of the other islands (Andros, Abaco, and Eleuthera) also have one major daily newspaper with very small circulations.

The country began radio broadcasting in 1937 with the British model of public service broadcasting and changed to a commercial system in 1950. By the 1980s the country had five radio stations and one television station, all government owned. Economic and political changes in the early 1990s changed the ownership and control of electronic media in the country. Privatization and liberalization policies brought new players to the field of broadcasting as private radio and cable television began operating in the country. Prior to opening the market to private media enterprises, the country had access to foreign media through spillover signals since the introduction of radio and television in the United States in the 1920s and 1950s respectively. Later, in the 1980s, many Bahamians extended this access through their ownership of satellite dishes and VCRs. Today the country has a mixed media market with government-controlled local television and public radio. Radio, cable television (owned by a local consortium and providing mostly foreign media products, primarily American), satellite and Internet are privately owned; the government also is an Internet provider. Media are concentrated in the capital cities of the most populous islands: Nassau, New Providence; Freeport, Grand Bahama; Marsh Harbour, Abaco, and Governor's Harbour, Eleuthera.

The Bahamas, like other Caribbean countries, has a very vibrant culture juxtaposed between the old and the new worlds. There is the influence of African culture and the history of slavery and colonization, which imposed British social structures, norms and values. From civil service to education and judiciary, this English-speaking country, like its English-speaking Caribbean counterparts, has built its educational, legal and political systems on the British model. Also influencing Bahamian culture are Caribbean culture and the ever-imposing American culture that seems to be the most dominant culture in the Bahamas. The country, like

many other countries in the region, is caught between the flotsam and jetsam of the American consumer culture, the remnants of African culture seen mostly at festive occasions, the admiration for things British and the emergence of a Caribbean culture based mostly on music, language and food.

### **Background of the Problem**

The Bahamas HIV/AIDS crisis must be seen against the backdrop of the wider Caribbean region's HIV/AIDS crisis. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is spreading rapidly throughout the Caribbean region. CARICOM (the regional union of sovereign-states in the Caribbean which includes Antigua, Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad, Tobago, Belize, Guyana and Suriname) estimates that more cases of HIV/AIDS were reported in the Caribbean between 1995 and 1998 than had been reported since the beginning of the epidemic in the early 1980s. (World Bank) At the end of 2002 there were approximately 440,000 people living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, up from 360,000 at the end of 1999. (USAID) However, as the World Bank 2001 study notes, this estimate may be low as many countries have underreported or have no reports on the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the region. "Given the widespread underreporting in the region, it is estimated that more than half a million people are infected with HIV." (World Bank)

Based on the region's heterogeneity, the World Bank study notes, epidemics in the Caribbean have different driving forces and transmission routes. According to this study, different countries also have varied in their responses to HIV/AIDS. "As a result, the Caribbean region as a whole might be considered to have not a single HIV/AIDS epidemic, but a 'mosaic' of epidemics." (World Bank)

The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean poses special development challenges for the region. These countries have small economies, are heavily dependent on export revenues and tourism, lack regional integration on trade and monetary issues, are vulnerable to natural disasters, and now have a growing incidence of HIV/AIDS. "Many countries are losing their youngest people to emigration and to the effects of HIV/AIDS epidemic." (USAID)

Since 1985 the Bahamas has had a strong commitment to the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. With the highest annual incidence rate in the English speaking Caribbean, the country implemented a comprehensive national HIV/AIDS program in 1985 and has had remarkable success over the past 18 years. However, as ideal as the Bahamian model may be in achieving these successes in the fight against HIV/AIDS, there are serious gaps in its assessment and evaluation of the communication campaigns that have been implemented since the late 1980s. This measurement problem is not limited to the Bahamas; it also exists in the wider Caribbean region.

The Red Cross summarizes the problem as a "gap in HIV/AIDS work" in the Caribbean region. (Red Cross Caran) Its Strategic Framework notes that the magnitude of HIV/AIDS is so enormous that, although many organizations are working in the area of HIV/AIDS, there still exist some gaps in the areas of prevention, care and support and advocacy in many countries within the Caribbean region. The Strategic Framework states that one of the major areas where the gap is evident is in the communication campaign "Information on AIDS awareness and prevention has not reached everybody." (Red Cross Caran)

The Red Cross also notes, “There is a need for tailor-made strategies and campaign materials especially for vulnerable communities. There is an extreme shortage of targeted and culturally appropriate HIV/AIDS information material in many countries in the region.” (Red Cross Caran)

The Bahamas National AIDS Program also has identified these areas as areas that need urgent attention. A May 2002 strategy report on the country’s latest initiative to arrest the spread of HIV/AIDS, “Commonwealth of The Bahamas Accelerating Access to Care and Support for Bahamians Living with HIV/AIDS,” (Bahamas Government) outlines the country’s plans to improve and enhance its response to HIV/AIDS through communication campaigns. One of the objectives the report describes is the need to strengthen advocacy and resource mobilization efforts that will ensure universal access to Bahamians in need of antiretroviral (ARV) medication through better communication -both interpersonal and mediated:

The goal of the Initiative’s communication component is to increase the demand and uptake of care and support services for people living with HIV/AIDS and their families, while also reducing the stigma that surrounds the epidemic.

The communication strategy will also seek to increase the visibility of prevention initiatives and send a clear message that prevention of the further spread of HIV is still the best weapon for the successful fight against the epidemic. (Bahamas Government)

More pointedly, at Forum 2003, Dr. McNeil framed the problem with the following question: “How do we reach those infected or at risk for infection and address social and behavioral issues?” Many health communication planners, theorists and practitioners (Atkin and Wallack; Lupton; Nowak and Siska; Bond, Kreniske, Susser, and Vincent; and Hornik) have noted the difficult challenge in changing human sexual behavior. It is perhaps the most difficult challenge in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. In many Caribbean countries fear, stigma and social norms inhibit discussion of sexual mores and behaviors. The crux of national AIDS programs’ success lies in changing deeply ingrained personal, group and social behaviors. As the 2003 World Bank IMF Joint Report points out, “changes in attitudes, values and practices emerge from social processes, which themselves vary enormously across settings and cultures.” (World Bank and International Monetary Fund)

The 2001 World Bank study also stresses the need to address the information gaps in the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns. “Information gaps need to be addressed in order to make final recommendations on breast-feeding and medical care policies for HIV-positive women in Caribbean countries,” the report noted. (World Bank)

The predominant mode of transmission of HIV in the Bahamas and the rest of the Caribbean is heterosexual sex, primarily among the sexually active age group, 20-44 years. In the 1980s, three epidemics were occurring simultaneously in the Bahamas: crack cocaine, genital ulcers and HIV. These three epidemics combined and contributed to the high incidence of HIV in the country. By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the country experienced a four-fold increase in HIV infection.

In 1983 the government of the Bahamas began monitoring the number of HIV/AIDS cases in the country. By 2000, AIDS had become the second leading cause of death in the general population of the Bahamas, and the leading cause of death among all persons 15-44 years of age. The number of new persons testing HIV positive increased from 347 in 1999 to 408 in

2000. As of December 31, 2001, there had been a cumulative total of 8,852 HIV infections, 4,092 cases of AIDS and 4,760 persons testing HIV positive. Of the 4,092 cases of AIDS, 2,938 or 71 percent have died. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat)

According to the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, the country continues to record more than 280 new cases of AIDS per year. On the positive side, the country has recorded a drop in mortality from AIDS. The death rate declined from 70 percent to 50 percent from 1994 to 2000. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat) However, the decrease in the death rate could be attributed to the fact that antiretroviral drugs (ARV) are more readily available for the treatment of HIV/AIDS. Since October 2001, the government of the Bahamas has contributed more than \$1 million for the purchase of ARVs. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat)

Even though people with HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas are living longer with the help of antiretroviral drugs, the number of new HIV/AIDS cases each year still remains high. What accounts for this? Why are people not changing their behaviors or, if they are, to what extent? How effective are the messages? Are they reaching the target audiences? Without effective measurement of the impact of messages, analysis of channels of distribution and analysis of the content of messages, it is very difficult to state that the messages have had a strong effect on the target publics.

The fastest growing group of persons testing positive for HIV is Bahamian adolescents, both males and females. This group is perhaps least likely to be reached by national television PSAs, programs or advertisements since they are more likely to interact with foreign media and the local private radio stations. Further, the government's messages were not targeted to this specific group. As the World Bank study notes, in order to be successful, HIV/AIDS campaigns must prevent the sexual transmission of HIV in young people and adults. "Reaching young people is a key element in the prevention of the AIDS epidemic," the report noted. (World Bank)

### **Goals and Objectives of the Campaigns**

In 1985 the Bahamas government established the National Standing Committee for the Prevention and Control of AIDS. This committee evolved into the National AIDS Program (NAP). NAP implemented a comprehensive healthcare program to attack the HIV/AIDS problem. A significant part of the program focused on health promotion campaigns and public information campaigns. The information campaigns began in the Bahamas in 1985 and were targeted first at high-risk groups (prostitutes and drug addicts sharing needles). However, by the mid-1990s the campaigns were mainly aimed at the general population. In 1988 NAP established the AIDS Secretariat to coordinate the HIV/AIDS education/information campaigns.

In July 2003 the AIDS Secretariat noted in a report on the progress of the National HIV/AIDS Program that the overall goal of the country's national HIV/AIDS program is to develop a national program that reduces the incidence and impact of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat) The main goal of the promotion and information campaigns is the prevention and control of the spread of STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections), HIV and AIDS in the Bahamas. In 2001, the AIDS Secretariat extended the goals of the program to include the need to empower persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) and the community to promote well-being by creating supportive environments.

There are no clearly defined objectives for the promotion and information/education campaigns. However, according to the AIDS Secretariat 2003 report (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat), overall objectives of the Secretariat are:

1. To reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS in vulnerable populations.
2. To sustain reduction of vertical transmissions from mother to child.
3. To promote policies to enhance development and stimulate new legislation.
4. To promote human rights and non-discrimination in the society.
5. To coordinate and disseminate information for all matters dealing with HIV/AIDS and STIs.

### **Strategic Tactics and Techniques**

The Bahamas government, through the Ministry of Health, partnered with regional and international agencies to address various aspects of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The country implemented a multi-sector national response that engaged government, civil society and local, regional and international donors. Some of the international partners included the European Union and its member countries, the Joint United Nations Program on AIDS (UNAIDS), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Regional partnerships were formed with CAREC (Caribbean Epidemiology Center), CARICOM, CRN+ (Caribbean Network for People Living with HIV/AIDS), PAHO (Pan American Health Organization), the Caribbean Research Council and the University of the West Indies. Within the country the NAP developed partnerships with the Bahamas AIDS Foundation, the Bahamas Red Cross, Samaritan House, Imperial Life Insurance Company and numerous other civic and religious organizations.

The Bahamas government's quick response to the epidemic and the results of its programs make the Bahamas, like Uganda, a model for success in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. The country's comprehensive approach resulted in a collaborative effort with all sectors of the community to develop programs that would aid in the control and spread of HIV/AIDS. This approach addressed political, economic, social and cultural characteristics of the Bahamas in the design and implementation of the program.

In 1985 NAP identified specific strategies for the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS:

1. prevention of sexual transmission.
2. prevention of transmission through blood/blood products.
3. prevention of prenatal transmission
4. conduct epidemiological surveillance and research.
5. reduction of the impact of HIV infection on individuals, groups and society.
6. development of treatment protocols for HIV/AIDS. (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat)

The AIDS Secretariat's information/education programs drew on the expertise of volunteers and persons in non-government organizations and used a wide variety of tactics and techniques to reach the population. For example, mass media (radio, television, and to a lesser extent, print), word of mouth, group sessions, displays and exhibitions, and theatre presentations. Overall, the national program emphasized care, treatment and support, research and surveillance. The following section outlines promotion and information/education campaigns that have been implemented in the country since 1988.

### HIV/AIDS Promotion and Information/Education Campaigns

The national health promotion and information campaigns provided communities and individuals with information and skills to advance their own health needs. The campaigns used interpersonal communication and mediated communication channels to reach a broad cross section of the country. Most of the mediated campaigns were concentrated in the two major urban centers—Nassau and Freeport. In the Family Islands the campaigns were transmitted mainly on the public radio stations.

One of the target publics the educational campaigns addressed immediately was the Haitian population. According to the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, “Significant work has been done at the community level. The French–Creole speaking population presented the challenge of a language barrier.” (Bahamas AIDS Secretariat) In response to this challenge, the Secretariat trained laypersons and Creole community leaders to interact with this population and educate them about HIV/AIDS and the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS. According to the AIDS Secretariat, this approach resulted in greater impact upon this population than other approaches.

Health communicators also used social marketing to promote condom use. This on-going program uses a combination of interpersonal and mediated communication. Posters, advertisements and PSAs are used to disseminate the message through various channels. Bartenders are used as lay educators to encourage condom use, particularly among the tourists and college students on spring break. The condoms are “gift wrapped” with brightly colored fliers and placed in strategic locations or given to bartenders to distribute to attract and promote condom use. Condoms are placed in hotels, guesthouses, restaurants, bars and other places frequented by students on spring break.

The Secretariat also used cultural activities such as the Family Island Regattas to inform and educate Bahamians on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Brochures, posters, fliers, pamphlets and other print materials were distributed at these events.

The Secretariat conducted training workshops for civic organizations, unions, churches and uniformed organizations such as the police force, defense force and customs and immigration officers. The Secretariat also developed information/educational programs in conjunction with civic organizations. Youth groups such as The Bahamas Red Cross, Girl Guides and the Pathfinders developed programs to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in their target areas. For example, in 1999 the Red Cross initiated a junior volunteers HIV/AIDS training program to encourage the delay of the initial sex act, explain various preventive methods and advocate the concept of sound care.

Teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, and persons living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) worked with the AIDS Secretariat to target school populations to discourage risk-taking behaviors. The Bahamas AIDS Secretariat organized the AIDS Secretariat Annual School Competition in which schools throughout New Providence, Grand Bahama and the Family Islands participated. This educational campaign is targeted at the nation’s youth so they can acquire knowledge and understanding about HIV/AIDS. These contests include essay writing, poetry and art.

In 2002 a pilot program *Focus on Youth*, based on a Canadian model, targeted the youth population in New Providence. *Focus on Youth* is a research-based prevention program that gives young women skills to postpone their first sexual encounter and make wise decisions regarding sexuality. The initial program was tested in New Providence. In 2003 additional schools were targeted in New Providence and the Family Islands to participate in the program. The targeted population was also expanded to include young men.

The media, especially local television, have played a significant role in the public communication campaigns. The mass media were used to disseminate AIDS messages to the public throughout the country. In television, radio and to a lesser extent print media, prevention efforts were designed to increase knowledge and personal health skills of specifically targeted populations. PSAs were produced as mini-daytime dramas with different endings. “This type of presentation allows the viewer to interact with a romantic or potentially sexual scenario; by making the right decision for the character on the screen the viewers also reinforce the safe choices that will protect them in real life.” (Caribbean AIDS Telecommunication Information Network) News stories, talk shows and editorials also were used.

Billboards were also strategically placed in the urban cities of Nassau and Freeport. One of the prominent billboards, placed in the busy business district in downtown Nassau near the entrance of the major public hospital, read “No Sex No AIDS ...Know Sex, Know AIDS.” Posters, brochures and fliers created by Secretariat staff rendered such messages as “Protect yourself, your wife and your main squeeze. USE A CONDOM EVERYTIME”, “Tips for a safe date: Privacy leads to intimacy... petting leads to sexual intercourse. STICK WITH THE CROWDS!!!” “AIDS? Could it happen to YOU?” “No matter which place or what time, talk to your partner about protection from HIV/AIDS”, and “The road to AIDS is paved with excuses: ‘he looked fine’, ‘we didn’t have a condom’ ‘I didn’t think it could happen to me.’ Use a Condom Everytime.”

Posters and fliers were placed in the window of the Bank of Nova Scotia in downtown Nassau, chosen because it is a major thoroughfare for tourists. The bank building is located near the harbor where the cruise ships dock. According to Campbell, the former director of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat, many tourists and citizens gave positive feedback on the AIDS messages displayed in the bank’s window.

In the Family Islands, structured outreach workshops were held on an ongoing basis. These workshops were held at the community clinics in the Family Islands and were usually coordinated by the community clinic staff—nurse and administrative staff.

## **Results Achieved**

At the end of 2001, three notable trends were evident in the Bahamas: a dramatic drop in mother-to-child transmissions, a decline in the overall mortality rate and an overall decrease in new persons testing HIV positive—from 700 plus in 1994 to 350 plus in 1999, and fewer than 2.0 percent of antenatal clinic clients continuing to be HIV positive.

Specific successes included:

Health practitioners believed that there was increased awareness of HIV/AIDS among the Bahamian population.

Condom sales increased by 33 percent between 1998 and 1999. Also, the overall condom distribution in the private and public sector had increased and involved health care settings, hotels, guesthouses, motels and bars.

The HIV seroprevalence rate among pregnant women declined from 5.4 percent in 1993 to 3 percent in 2000 (a 44 percent decrease in HIV seroprevalence rate). At the end of 2001 it had dropped to less than 2.0 percent.

Pregnant women showed an improvement in seeking early antenatal case with 95 percent agreeing to undergo voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) for HIV antibodies.



The Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV rate was reduced from 28 percent to 12 percent (a 57 percent reduction rate in MTCT of HIV).

There was a decrease in the AIDS death rate from 70 percent to 50 percent.

Increasing and sustained support to the national response from the private sector was observed.

Increasing and sustained support from regional and international NGOs occurred.

## **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that these programs have yielded successes. The Bahamas have recorded dramatic reductions in mother-to-child transference, a decline in the number of persons dying from HIV/AIDS and a decrease in the number of persons infected by HIV/AIDS. However, these results are based on hospital and clinical patients—those who come in contact with medical personnel. The impact of the campaign messages on the population at large, particularly the population located away from the urban centers, leaves many doubts as to the overall effectiveness of the public information/educational campaigns.

Before designing new messages and new campaigns to fill the ‘information gap,’ health communication planners in the Bahamas should assess previous and current communication campaigns. Measuring the effectiveness of past and on-going campaigns could provide new direction and emphasis for the HIV/AIDS communication campaigns. Most importantly, evaluation and assessment of previous and on-going campaigns will allow communication planners to know what succeeded and what failed. Which messages were effective and which ones were not? Which channels were effective and which channels were not effective? Communication planners should also identify best communication campaign practices in the region; this approach would provide a benchmark for comparison of other HIV/AIDS communication campaigns in the Caribbean. Wherever possible, they also should pretest their messages.

No study has been done to quantify the impact of the mass media messages. Further, the television viewing habits of Bahamians are complex. Local television—the state owned ZNS TV 13—plays a significant role in the mass media campaigns. But with the influx of foreign programming and easy access to foreign programming (satellite, cable and Internet), it is not known how effective these national messages have been as there are no definitive studies that reveal how many Bahamians watch the national television service. So who are the recipients of the television messages—PSAs, news programs and talk shows—that are disseminated on national television? Did the Bahamian population, particularly the at-risk populations, receive these messages and did they respond? New communication technology also has changed Bahamian media habits, perhaps making the national television channel an ineffective channel for the dissemination of the HIV/AIDS communication campaign messages.

Many researchers and theorists (Mendelsohn, 1968, 1973; Levy and Windahl; McGuire; Parott; Hyman and Sheastsley; Wallack; and Cutlip, Center, Broom) have offered reasons why information campaigns succeed or fail. In an elaborate treatise Mendelsohn explains why some communication campaigns succeed. He believes communication campaigns succeed if they have realistic goals, environmental support systems and knowledge of the target audiences. (Mendelsohn 1973) In opposition to Mendelsohn, Hyman and Sheastsley explain why some communication campaigns fail. They reason that selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention are common threats to success of communication campaigns. They believe

these filters ensure that receivers will be immune to influence from campaigns. (Hyman and Sheastsley) Campaign planners are still caught between the two positions as campaign after campaign throughout the world supports either or both of these theories.

However, other researchers and theorists (Atkin and Wallack; Flay and Burton) note that campaigns that conduct formative research before the campaign begins are generally more effective. This pre-testing approach is designed to identify potential relevant issues, campaign themes, target audiences, message concepts and useful media channels/message vehicles. The idea is to know the intended audience(s) before specifying campaign objectives or devising message strategies (Atkin and Freimuth; Palmer).

At the end of the campaign communication planners also should conduct summative research. Nowak and Siska note post-campaign evaluations play a valuable role in influencing and shaping the messages of ongoing and future campaigns. (Nowak and Siska) Two types of post-campaign research that could be helpful are process evaluation and outcome/effectiveness evaluation. Process evaluation research attempts to determine when, where and how often campaign materials were shown or used. Outcome/effectiveness evaluation research determines whether campaigns or messages successfully achieved the desired outcomes.

Most of the Bahamas AIDS Secretariat's communication interventions were culturally sensitive to the needs of Bahamians, used peer educators, provided participants with skills training and were conducted over multiple sessions and long periods of time. Although no empirical studies have been conducted to evaluate or assess the communication interventions, the country has seen increasing condom use, increasing awareness, decreasing mortality rates, decreasing HIV/AIDS cases, declining hospital bed occupancy and decreasing mother-to-child transmission. What the data does not show, but what is highly probable, is a decrease in the number of sexual partners an individual might have, a decrease in the sharing of needles, a delay in the onset of intercourse and improved communication with partners regarding safer sexual practices. All of these outcomes are associated with decreasing HIV infection.

The Bahamas AIDS Secretariat needs to take immediate action to evaluate its communication campaigns before investing more funds in them. The stakes are too high. HIV/AIDS has no cure and if the HIV/AIDS epidemic is not arrested, the Bahamas and the Caribbean could face political, social, cultural and economic changes that will reverse the progress of the last 50 years. Therefore, public health communication campaigns should be evaluated and modified as indicated to ensure that they are useful in creating significant behavior change and improvements in health status. Simple association of trends over time with campaign initiations is not sufficient grounds for claiming a causal effect.

## **TEACHING NOTE**

### **Purpose of Case Study**

- To give students a better understanding of the importance of evaluation and assessment of campaign messages.
- To demonstrate the significance of research at all stages of the campaign—before the campaign begins, during the campaign and after the campaign ends.
- To explain how evaluation involves every phase of a campaign.

To emphasize the significance of knowing your audience and knowing how effective your messages are in reaching your target audience(s).

To emphasize the need for effective evaluation techniques such as impact analysis, audience coverage, audience response, campaign impact and environmental assessment.

### **Identifying the Problem**

HIV/AIDS communication campaigns (promotion, education and information) have not been assessed or evaluated in the Bahamas since they began in 1985. This lack of assessment continues today and has raised many of questions about the effectiveness of the messages.

As a result, campaign planners do not know which messages or channels of communication are most effective for target audience(s). The spread of HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas could have a devastating effect if the information gaps are not filled. Particularly noted is the recent increase of HIV/AIDS in adolescents. Information campaigns are under-funded and there are issues of underreporting of HIV/AIDS cases.

This situation raises crucial questions about campaign design and execution, benchmarking and pre-test and post-test of message design. The success stories are based on patients that healthcare officials in the Bahamas come in contact with, not on the general public.

The issues of this case study are multifaceted. First, campaign planners need to know the effectiveness of their messages. Second, they need to know what happened and why. Third, the importance of research at all stages of the campaigns must be addressed. Fourth, the successes of the Bahamian NAP must be viewed from the context of the populations that come to the public hospitals and clinics. Fifth, the multi-sector approach contributes to the successes of the Bahamas NAP.

The promotion and information/education campaigns are a major part of the NAP. However, there is no empirical evidence of how effective the communication campaigns are in prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS.

### **Forecasting the Most Desirable Outcome**

The most desirable outcome is for complete eradication of HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas through the use of effective communication campaigns. Ultimately, information/educational campaigns will become even more valuable in health promotion campaigns such as HIV/AIDS as the consequences become increasingly severe if this epidemic is not eradicated.

Another outcome is identifying the target audiences who need to be reached and the most appropriate communication channel to achieve desired effects. This approach could improve message design and content.

The Bahamas AIDS Secretariat should clearly identify its objectives for the promotion and information/education campaigns and thereby produce quantifiable results. This will provide communication planners with a better understanding of the impact of the campaigns and the effectiveness of the messages on their target audiences.

### **Identifying the Critical Issues**

1. When health communication campaigns are not evaluated there could be serious knowledge gaps, which could lead to insufficient information to help people change high-risk behavior, which could ultimately cause an increase in HIV/AIDS in developing countries like the Bahamas.
2. HIV/AIDS prevention programs, especially the communication campaigns, need more financial support to accomplish their goals and objectives. An increase in funding could lead to more reliable forms of evaluation.
3. More support is needed for HIV/AIDS-related research for communication campaigns at the national level. The increased support could lead to empirical studies that attempt to measure the impact of communication campaigns at the national level.
4. There are no clearly defined objectives for the information/education campaigns. Measuring the impact of a campaign is very difficult if there are no clearly defined objectives.
5. Identifying the target audience(s) is crucial to design and dissemination of messages.
6. Identifying appropriate channels of communication is also important for the prevention, treatment and care messages to reach the targeted population(s).

### **Stakeholders in this case**

1. Bahamas government
2. People of the Bahamas
3. People living with HIV/AIDS in the Bahamas
4. The business community of the Bahamas, especially the tourist industry
5. The country's political and social decision makers
6. Healthcare workers
7. Local, regional and international NGOs
8. The Caribbean region and its people
9. The Americas (United States of America, Canada, South America and Central America)

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. What benchmark data would you need to evaluate the success of the information/education campaigns in the Bahamas?
2. How would you systematically assess the Bahamas HIV/AIDS information/education campaigns?
3. How would formative research make a difference in the education/information campaigns?
4. What types of summative research would you use to evaluate the campaigns?
5. How do you account for the successes in the Bahamas National AIDS Program when there has been no formative or summative evaluation of the effectiveness of campaign messages?

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## About the Authors

**b j Altschul** is an assistant professor of public communication at American University in Washington, DC. Drawing from her previous experience as director of the Office of Communication for the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and public relations manager for the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute, she now specializes in ways to bridge the gap between scientists and non-scientists regarding the public relations challenges of food and agricultural biotechnology. As a consultant, she authored a background paper for the Virginia Biotechnology Research Act Study Commission when that state was considering what type of legislative oversight would best protect its citizens as the food and biotechnology industry sought to grow. Although her professional experience often has been in support of the industry, as an educator she strives to explore both the pros and cons from the perspective of all points of view. Toward that end, students in her public relations case studies classes role-play in teams representing major organizations, attempting to solve communication problems through online discussion, face-to-face debate in response to scenarios based on current news, and preparation of campaign materials on behalf of their “clients.”

**Ieva Burneikaitė** is a public relations consultant, currently working for the public relations agency Acta Publica in Lithuania. Her current assignments include consulting private and public sector organizations regarding issues of corporate communication, issues management and product promotion. She also is involved in political campaigns and elections campaigns. Prior to this position she was a public relations consultant in the advertising and public relations agency Adell Saatchi&Saatchi Lithuania. Ieva has a bachelor’s degree in sociology, which she received from Vilnius University, and a Master of Arts degree in communications from Ohio University, USA.

**Meta G. Carstarphen**, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma. A former assistant public affairs officer for the Federal Aviation Administration, she helped coordinate media relations, internal communication and education programs for the agency’s Southwest Regional office. Now a specialist in community relations and multicultural public relations, Carstarphen teaches courses in PR writing, multimedia, campaigns, research, race/gender/media, and cultural studies. She is the author of the Allyn & Bacon textbook, *Writing PR: A Multimedia Approach*.

**Mark Hucklebridge** APR is a journalism and public relations lecturer at California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo and the former director of public affairs at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey, CA. **William “Bill” Godnick** is a Policy Advisor for Latin America Security Peace Building Program, International Alert, and a PhD candidate in International Relations and Security Studies, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.



**Samsup Jo** is an assistant professor at Sookmyung Women's University in South Korea. His public relations centers on public relations management and international public relations. His articles have appeared in the *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *Mass Communication & Society*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, and *Journal of Promotion Management*. His professional experience includes several years as public relations manager at Cheil Communications in Seoul, Korea.

**Jooho Kim** is director and chief of the Public Relations Account Team at Cheil Communications in Seoul, South Korea. He has served at the agency for more than fifteen years, focusing on international public relations, and sports marketing. He has planned and handled various public relations program in more than twenty countries, including the United States, Australia, China, Thailand, Germany and Brazil. He participated in four Olympic sponsorship. He is a Council Member of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) and a Jury Member of the IPRA's Golden Award. He was an Adjunct Professor at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, and is the author of the book, *Winning Hongbo, Successful Public Relations*.

**Sunday Odedele, MPIR**, is an international public relations practitioner with 16 years of experience who currently is managing director of Petros-Faith Public Relations Consulting in Lagos, Nigeria. He holds both BEEC and NIPR diplomas and a PGD in marketing from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He is a member of the Nigeria Institute for Public Relations and of the Institute of Public Relations in the UK, and has spoken at several international public relations conferences including the World Public Relations Festival in Rome, 2003.

**Aydemir Okay** is an associate professor on the Communication Faculty at Istanbul University in Istanbul, teaching courses in public relations theory, corporate communication and sponsorship at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Prior to joining Istanbul University, he worked at Marmara and Mediterranean University. He is the author or co-author of four books and numerous articles and has presented at several international communication and public relations conferences. He is a member of the European Public Relations Research and Education Association (EUPRERA) and Istanbul Public Relations Association (HID).

**Ayla Okay** is an associate professor on the Communication Faculty at Istanbul University in Istanbul, teaching courses in public relations practices, new strategies in public relations, corporate identity and media relations at the undergraduate and graduate levels. She is the author or co-author of three books and numerous articles. She is a member of the Istanbul Public Relations Association (HID).

**Maria Schnabel**, APR, is the Director of Public Relations for BellSouth International, where she is responsible for the company's communications efforts in 10 Latin American countries, guiding the development of communications strategies of the company's affiliates to help them succeed in their highly competitive local environments. She assumed the position in 1999 after

returning from a two-year assignment for BellSouth in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she led the public relations and advertising function for the world's largest cellular launch at that time. In previous assignments, she headed the communications function for BellSouth's start-ups in Panama, Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Peru, Singapore, India, Israel and others. Before joining BellSouth International she was a Public Relations Manager for Southern Bell in Miami, where she was responsible for employee communications and issues management. She is a native of Barcelona, Spain. She attended San Diego State University, where she received a BA in Journalism; Syracuse University for her Masters in Communications Management; and Barry University in Miami, where she pursued MBA studies.

**Juliette Storr** is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication at North Carolina State University, teaching courses in public relations and international and intercultural communication at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Prior to beginning her academic career she worked as a print and broadcast journalist, public relations manager, television sales manager, radio announcer and television producer in several countries including Canada, The Bahamas and the United States.

**Donn James Tilson**, KHS, APR, Fellow PRSA (Ph.D., University of Stirling) is an associate professor of public relations at the University of Miami's School of Communication. The first in Europe to graduate with a doctorate in public relations, he has published and lectured internationally on corporate public relations, including as a European University Public Relations Confederation Visiting Scholar at Complutense University in Madrid and Autónoma University in Barcelona. A member of the Public Relations Society of America's College of Fellows and Chair-Elect of PRSA's International Section, he serves on the editorial board of *Ecquid Novi*, the research journal of the Southern African Communication Association, and is a former book review co-editor of *Journalism Studies*. He is a participating faculty member of the University of Miami's Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American Studies and Center for Latin American Studies and has led students on summer abroad programs to Spain. Prior to joining the University of Miami, he served as a public relations manager for BellSouth for 16 years, directing the company's charitable contributions and educational relations programs in Florida. In 1999 he was inducted as a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, one of the oldest Orders of Chivalry in the world.

## About the Editors

**Judy VanSlyke Turk**, director of the School of Mass Communications at Virginia Commonwealth University, spent two and a half years in the United Arab Emirates as founding dean of the College of Communication and Media Sciences at Zayed University, a public university for women with campuses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. She returned to the USA in March 2002 when she assumed her current position. She is 2004 chair of the International Section of Public Relations Society of America, and is a past chair of its College of Fellows and Educators Academy. She was named PRSA's Outstanding Educator in 1992. She is co-author of the textbook *This is PR: The Realities of Public Relations* and her research has been published in *Journalism Monographs*, *Journalism and Mass Communications Quarterly*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Public Relations Review* and *Public Relations Journal*. She has consulted and lectured on journalism curriculum development, press freedom and public relations in Eastern Europe, the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union and Asia.

**Linda H. Scanlan**, retired associate professor and chair of the journalism department at Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA, has trained journalists and public relations practitioners throughout Eastern Europe. She was a Fulbright Senior Scholar teaching journalism and public relations in Bulgaria in 1993-94, a USIS teaching fellow in Latvia in 1997, a Freedom House advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Romania in 1999, and a Fulbright Senior Specialist in Kosovo in 2001 to recommend journalism program resources for a new graduate program there. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Fulbright Association of the U.S., chairing its Advocacy and External Relations Committee, and is treasurer of the International Section of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Accredited (APR) by PRSA, she was president, ethics officer and Assembly delegate of the Hampton Roads Virginia Chapter, which recognized her as the "Professional of the Year" in 2001. She is a recipient of the Virginia Public Relations Medallion and is on the editorial review boards of several professional publications including *Public Relations Review*.