

UNESCO-UNICEF CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAMME

TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR DAY-CARE WORKERS

*A brief introduction to the Training  
Model of Mobile Creches in India*

*AIDS TO PROGRAMMING UNICEF ASSISTANCE  
TO EDUCATION*

**\* PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION 14 \***

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## TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR DAY-CARE WORKERS

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\* *Mobile Creches, a pioneer in the setting up*  
\* *of day-care services for urban under-privileged*  
\* *children, has also been a pioneer in developing*  
\* *a unique and innovative training programme for*  
\* *day-care workers. The main features of the model*  
\* *are laid out in the following sections.*  
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### I. NEED AND ORIGIN

Day-care services for children of construction workers and low-income groups in slums include health care, education, nutrition and education and comprise creche, balwadi and non-formal education sections to cater to the needs of children aged 0 - 14. In 1969, at the time when Mobile Creches was launched such a concept of day-care was a new one. It was found that no category of trained workers was available to respond to such diverse needs.

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\* *To deal with such a task, personnel were*  
\* *required to:*  
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\* *(a) accept the children with their poor hygiene*  
\* *and disease*  
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\* *(b) be willing to relate with dignity and without*  
\* *condescension and communicate with illiterate*  
\* *parents*  
\*  
\* *(c) be able to wash linen, cook, bathe infants and*  
\* *organize activities connected with an integ-*  
\* *rated day-care programme*  
\*  
\* *(d) deal with sickness and disease*  
\*  
\* *(e) look after a wide age-range - infants, pre-*  
\* *schoolers and other older children who had*  
\* *never been to school*  
\*  
\* *(f) teach children of various levels from Balwadi*  
\* *to older children.*  
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Besides the multi-purpose nature of the job arising out of an integrated programme and a wide age-range, other difficulties are:

\* / For a detailed account on Mobile Creches, see "Basic Services for Children: a continuing search for learning priorities" - Vol. I. 1978 p. 142 (Unesco, IBE, Experiments & innovations in education. No.36)

\*\* / For an introduction to Balwadi, see N.S.9 - "How to run a Balwadi"

- (a) the long hours of work (related to mother's working time) and the primitive physical conditions under which work had to be carried out, which was inevitable in the setting of the construction work industry.
- (b) The heavy amount of manual work involved - always a part of infant care and more so in tough environmental conditions.
- (c) Low pay, inevitable in any social welfare activity and more so in newly-emerging fields.

Existing categories of workers (balsevikas - i.e., attendants - primary teachers, nurses, ayahs - maids, etc.) were either unwilling to work in these circumstances or, if willing, were unable to respond adequately to the range of tasks involved. So Mobile Creches was obliged to develop its own training programme. Recruits were taken on the basis of willingness to work in these circumstances. Their qualifications ranged from illiterate to higher secondary. Basic skills taught included infant care and its routine, preventive health, hygiene and preventive health, knowledge of basic medicine, and appropriate educational activities for children 3-6, 6+ etc.

## II. SETTING UP AND EVOLUTION

The first attempts at training consisted mostly of group discussions at which the organizers and workers jointly thrashed out various problems and arrived at workable solutions. *This method of group problem-solving continues to hold a vital place in the method of training.*

Gradually resource persons and specialists of various types, especially doctors and teachers, began to be drawn into these group discussions and to contribute at various levels. Within a few years, both the programme and training had been developed with the help of a variety of resource persons including doctors, nutritionists, social workers, teachers, administrators, educationists, artists and social scientists belonging to disciplines like child development, psychology, sociology, etc.

From the beginning the training was multi-disciplinary as well as pragmatic. Many procedures grew directly from solutions found by field workers. All the ideas contributed by specialists had to be cast in terms that could be understood and carried out by field staff, often of low educational qualifications. Many of the academics failed to respond to the challenge, others rose to the occasion. The touchstone of practical applicability and feasibility was made the guiding principle.

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*   From this constant reference back to field
*   situations, stress on the field workers' percep-
*   tions, abilities and responses in the field,
*   developed the now familiar and characteristic
*   pattern of services and training at Mobile Creches.
*   It has been the product of a dialogue between sound
*   principles, enunciated by academics, and sound prac-
*   tice reflected by field workers.
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### III. PATTERN OF TRAINING

Recruits are put directly on to working in the approximately 30 day-care centres run by Mobile Creches. The greater part of the time is spent in actual work, which is closely supervised and guided by a cadre of trainer/supervisors, who devote a major share of their time to this activity. A fixed amount of time is devoted to workshop sessions which allow the theoretical framework to be elaborated, discussed and materials prepared.

Over the course of time, a broad outline of course content has been drawn up, and this is covered eventually by all the trainees. However, the order and manner in which various topics appear and the depth at which they are discussed may differ from group to group and from time to time.

The training programme, unlike any other in the country, is not a theoretical course with practical elements woven into it, but an on-the-job field training with theoretical elements derived from day-to-day field experience. It is a uniquely inductive approach, allowing principles to be drawn from practice rather than quoting specific examples to illustrate general principles as is commonly done.

### IV. TRAINER CADRE

A vital role is played by the trainer/supervisor cadre who carry out the bulk of the training. They are supported by resource personnel both from within the institution and outside when required.

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*      An outstanding characteristic of this cadre,      *  
*      now numbering 16, is their long practical expo-   *  
*      sure to the field situation, familiarity with the *  
*      problems likely to be encountered and their proven *  
*      ability in organization as well as in resource-    *  
*      fulness and ability to respond to new challenges. *  
*      The trainer/supervisors vary in their educational *  
*      levels from high school to post-graduate, though  *  
*      the majority of them are graduates and several    *  
*      have special qualifications in areas such as      *  
*      nutrition, social work, education and arts.      *  
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For the reasons already stated, there is and can be no direct recruitment to this cadre. All potential trainer-supervisors are drawn from the general pool of those who have been exposed to field work for a fairly long period. Advantage is taken of people with special abilities and qualifications, both within and outside the institution, by bringing them in as resource persons. This gives flexibility and allows for the use of talents or people who may not fulfil the other criteria. The responsibility for planning and carrying out the training programme and for implementing the actual programmes in the field, however, rests with the trainer/supervisor cadre.

## V. METHOD/PROCESS OF TRAINING

The training process falls into *four* broad stages.

- (a) Exposure: During this stage, the new recruit is placed in the field, observes and begins to work: first performing simple and routine tasks and then gradually getting accustomed to all the various drills, routines and procedures carried out daily. Meanwhile, the trainee is closely watched by the supervisor for aptitudes, abilities and interests (six weeks to three months).
- (b) Experience: At this stage, which is a prolonged one, the trainee is gradually induced by experience into wider and wider range of skills, tasks and functions. The chosen method is role modelling - consistently working alongside and learning from a more experienced person. To a large extent, attitudes are also absorbed in this process of role modelling (one to two years).
- (c) Conceptualization: This stage, which is concurrent to a large extent with stage (b), begins three to four months after induction. The trainees' field experiences are drawn upon, analyzed and theoretical concepts and principles derived from them. The daily routines are placed in context and there is an attempt to arrive at their rationale through discussion. During this stage, the main theoretical framework is covered. The methods used are participatory and draw upon a wide variety of techniques such as educational games, discussions, role play, audio-visual aids, assignments, surveys, projects, drama and other small group techniques. (One to two years).
- (d) Problem-solving: By this time, it is expected that trainees will not only be equipped with a basic set of skills and supporting knowledge, but also have imbibed certain basic attitudes which come by identification with the goals and objectives of the programme. From this vantage point they are now ready to tackle the more difficult and challenging problems and to look at the wider context of the work and its implications. Practice in the application of principles is given by tackling the more complex problems of management, administration, programme, curriculum development, community work, communication, etc. The methods used, as in the previous stages, are of a wide variety, and at this stage are often suggested by the participants themselves (last few months).

## VI. TRAINING CAPACITY

At any given time, training is going on at several levels.

- (a) To begin with, there are several batches of trainees (those with less than two years' work) undergoing initial basic training at two or more levels. Regular monthly or fortnightly sessions are held for each of these.
- (b) Ongoing: Those who have completed the two years of basic training (after a period which may be somewhat less than or more than two years) and are found to have achieved a satisfactory basic level are exposed to ongoing on-the-job training. This also includes staff who have had long periods of service but are, for some reason, inadequate in certain respects - those who have been on leave for long periods, those with low educational qualifications who need special assistance, etc.

- (d) Advanced: Those who have completed three years of work and who have shown themselves to be competent multi-purpose workers are given advanced training, either with a view to joining the cadre of trainer/supervisors or one of the other specialist cadres. Currently there are three such cadres (health workers, arts and crafts workers and music and drama specialists). Other specialist cadres may emerge in the future. A cadre of specialists in non-formal education is a possibility at this time. At present, of 220-250 workers, 50-75 persons are undergoing basic training, another 100 on-going in-service and about 50 advanced or specialised training.

### VIII. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MODEL

The model of training described above is linked to the existence of an extensive field programme and cannot be conceived without it. The on-going programme of 30-40 centres provides the necessary field exposure and opportunity for practical training.

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*   The characteristics of the model are:
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*   i) duration: on-the-job apprenticeship for
*                two years
*   ii) method:  experimental, pragmatic, parti-
*                cipatory
*   iii) approach: inductive
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*   The outcome is a stress on flexibility, inno-
*   vativeness, decentralized decision-making and
*   speed of response to new situations.
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The model of training has been accepted both nationally and internationally as an appropriate way of training workers for work with underprivileged children as is evident from references to it in the following meetings:

1. Teacher Education for the Pre-school Child - National Seminar (Indian Council for Child Welfare) - March 1978, New Delhi, India
2. National International Year of the Child (IYC): Seminar on the Child (Ministry of Social Welfare and NIPCCD) - April 1979, New Delhi, India
3. The situation of the Child in Asia - (UNICEF) - May 1977, Manila, Philippines
4. New Approaches to the Education of the Children of Disadvantaged Groups - (Unesco) - August 1978, Bangkok, Thailand