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ACTION PROGRAMME ON ESSENTIAL DRUGS AND VACCINES
 INFORMATION, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY



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ACTION PROGRAMME ON ESSENTIAL DRUGS AND VACCINES
INFORMATION, EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

SUMMARY

Background The Action Programme on Essential Drugs and Vaccines (DAP), together with the Programme Support Service (PSS), have been successful in attracting support, in providing regular information about programme activities and in stimulating dialogue on the essential drugs (ED) concept. Essential drugs lists have been widely adopted and many countries are now actively considering or implementing essential drugs programmes. However, informational and educational gaps remain, and certain essential drugs principles which are still contested or not yet widely applied need more active promotion.

A four-year communication strategy is therefore planned with the following objectives:

1. To increase awareness of the ED concept by strengthening the capacity of the support advocacy network to promote the concept with a full range of information.
2. To bring about a change in formal training by assisting universities and training institutions to adapt their curricula and actively promote the ED concept, rational drug use, and their national essential drugs programmes.
3. To improve prescribing habits by informing health professionals in developing countries about the ED concept and related issues so that they prescribe rationally from an essential drugs list.
4. To maintain donor support for the Action Programme and WHO-approved national essential drugs programmes.

Target groups The target groups are: (1) the support advocacy network; (2) universities and training institutions; (3) health professionals; and (4) donors.

Monitoring and evaluation Behavioural indicators and criteria of success have been developed. Monitoring will be continuous, with reviews every year. The strategy will be evaluated externally at the end of a four-year period.

Budget The strategy will cost \$360,000 per annum for the four-year period.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past three years, the Action Programme and PSS have jointly carried out communication activities with the aim of building up a support network, giving regular information about the Programme, and stimulating dialogue on the concept of essential drugs. A DAP mailing list has been set up. Requests for the popular Essential Drugs Monitor continue to come in: circulation already stands at 18,000 (11,000 regular subscriptions and the balance distributed at workshops, conferences, etc.) and is likely to reach 20,000 by the end of the year. Press kits and materials have been made available at major international meetings. Teaching Aids at Low Cost (TALC) in the UK and DAP have produced slide series. As the constant flow of press cuttings shows, the essential drugs concept and related topics are regularly in the news because they still arouse brisk controversy, even though over 100 countries now have essential drug lists or related projects.

The many interested parties need a continuing flow of information, documentation and briefing on basic facts, new policies, practical experience, and subjects of polemic. These parties include promoters of the ED concept and of the Action Programme, potential lecturers and authors, visitors to WHO, groups addressed during duty travel by DAP staff, radio and television stations, particularly in developing countries, and the technical press.

At present, universities, other training institutions and trainees lack the input for curriculum change and teaching/learning materials. Health professionals in many countries are by no means entirely converted to the ED concept, which may be largely due to the fact that they frequently have no regular source of objective information; although other reasons, such as the fact that some of them both prescribe and dispense drugs, may also contribute. Donors need more information about how DAP works, budgeting, the funds needed, and activities foreseen.

The Action Programme also needs to counteract certain misconceptions or counter-arguments, e.g. that generic drugs are no good, that doctors will lose their freedom to prescribe whatever they wish, that manufacturers will be unable to pursue research, or that certain individuals will not get the drugs they need.

II. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Action Programme is to ensure the availability in Member States of a regular supply of safe and effective drugs and vaccines at an acceptable quality and at low cost.

The objectives of the communication strategy are:

1. To increase awareness of the concept of essential drugs by strengthening the capacity of the support advocacy network to promote the concept with a full range of information.
2. To bring about a change in formal training by assisting universities and training institutions to adapt their curricula and actively promote the concept of essential drugs, rational drug use, and their national essential drug programmes.
3. To improve prescribing habits by informing health professionals in developing countries about the ED concept, and by providing them with objective information on the indications for correct use, so that they prescribe rationally from an essential drugs list.
4. To maintain financial support from donors for the Action Programme and for WHO-approved national essential drug programmes.

III. TARGET GROUPS

1. Support advocacy network (existing and potential): non-governmental organizations, national associations, special interest groups, lecturers and authors, radio and television stations, visitors to WHO, groups addressed by DAP staff on duty travel, and the technical press.
2. Universities and training institutions: faculties of medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and social, community and preventive medicine; schools of public health; training schools for medical assistants and pharmacy technicians.
3. Health professionals in developing countries.
4. Donors (existing and potential).

IV. STRATEGY

1. Motivation of a support advocacy network of influential individual speakers, writers, and NGOs to carry out active promotion of the ED concept, Programme and related issues.

2. Information, including audio-visual material, to radio and television stations (particularly in developing countries), to WHO visitors and to national groups addressed by DAP staff, on the ED concept, Programme and related issues.
3. Advocacy directed at health policy makers, heads of universities and training institutions to convert them to the ED concept, and assistance with curricula changes and the development of new training material.
4. Information directed to health professionals in developing countries, concentrating on rational prescribing.
5. Information directed to donors, covering the ED concept, Programme and progress in national essential drugs programmes.

V. ACTIVITIES

The following activities are proposed for the strategy:

1. Motivation of support advocacy network
 - (a) Identification of and tentative approach to a list of potential organisations, speakers and writers.
 - (b) Identification of opportunities for the above to carry out promotional activities.
 - (c) Development, testing and production of a full range of materials necessary to support the network.
 - (d) Agreement with supporters, supply of support materials and technical advice.
 - (e) Implementation of promotional activities by support network.
2. Information to broadcasters, visitors to WHO, national groups
 - (a) Listing of stations, types of visitors and of national groups and their requirements.
 - (b) Development, testing and production of a full range of support (including audio-visual) materials.
 - (c) Distribution of support materials to broadcasters, with additional information on national EDP situation.
 - (d) Use of support materials by DAP staff addressing visitors to HQ or to national groups while on duty travel.
 - (e) Despatch of follow-up materials in response to reply cards.
3. Advocacy to universities and training institutions
 - (a) Listing of institutions by country and of available support materials.
 - (b) Approach to heads of schools and identification of needs.
 - (c) Workshops on curriculum development.
 - (d) Development, testing, production and distribution of new and missing training materials.
 - (e) Introduction of curriculum change.
4. Information to health professionals in developing countries
 - (a) Listing of opinion-leading health professionals, especially doctors and pharmacists, in developing countries by DAP staff on duty travel and from other sources.

- (b) Listing of existing prescribers' reviews, and of journals received by professionals in each country.
- (c) Identification of and assistance to groups interested in or attempting to publish prescribers' reviews.
- (d) Development, testing and production of support materials.
- (e) Distribution of support materials to selected health professionals, reviews and journals, with reply cards.

5. Information for donors

- (a) Identification of needs through survey of existing and potential donors and donation patterns.
- (b) Listing of events at which active promotion to donors can be carried out by DAP staff.
- (c) Development, testing and production of support materials.
- (d) Direct approach to donors using support materials.
- (e) Follow-up of interest and of requests for further advice.

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Achievement of the objectives will be monitored every year against the following behavioural indicators and criteria of success:

Target group	Behavioural indicators	Baseline figure	Criterion of success	Achievement after 4 yrs
Support network	No. of supporters engaging in promotional activities		5 per country per year	
	No. of radio and television stations returning reply cards		20% of total number informed	
	No. of times DAP staff use materials in presentations		100%	
	No. of articles on ED and rational drug use in the technical press			
Universities and training institutions	No. of institutions adding ED concept to curriculum of doctors, nurses and pharmacists		20% of total per country	
Health professionals	No. of new prescribers' reviews started		1 per country	
Donors	No. of donors increasing contributions		25% increase per per donor year	

The communication strategy will be evaluated externally at the end of a four-year period.

VII. BUDGET

	per annum \$
<u>Motivation</u>	
Consultants	10 000
Travel	5 000
Production of support materials	30 000
Despatch	5 000
Total	50 000
<u>Advocacy/Training</u>	
Consultants.....	20 000
Travel.....	20 000
Workshops.....	30 000
Production of training materials.....	70 000
Despatch.....	10 000
Total	150 000
<u>Information</u>	
Consultants	10 000
Travel	10 000
Production of information materials	70 000
Purchase of information materials for developing countries	10 000
Despatch	10 000
Total	110 000
<u>Operational research</u>	
Baseline surveys	5 000
Information system	5 000
Total	10 000
<u>Monitoring and evaluation</u>	
Annual reviews	10 000
Evaluation	10 000
Total	20 000
<u>Management</u>	
Contingency travel	20 000
Total	20 000

VIII. TIME-FRAME

Activity	1988				1989				1990				1991				1992			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
<u>Motivation of network</u>																				
Supporters list					=====															
Events list					===				===				===							===
Materials																				
Despatch																				
Events																				
<u>Information to broadcasters, etc.</u>																				
Listing of stations					===															
Materials																				
Despatch																				
Introduction and use																				
Follow-up despatch																				
<u>Advocacy to institutions</u>																				
Institution list					=====				===				===							
Contacts & needs identification					=====				===				===							
Workshops									===				===							===
Materials																				
Curriculum change																				
<u>Information to health professionals</u>																				
Listing of health professionals					===															
Listing of journals					===															
Assistance to reviews																				
Materials																				
Despatch																				
Follow-up despatch																				
<u>Information to donors</u>																				
Listing of events					===				===				===							===
Materials																				
Approaches to donors with materials																				
Follow-up despatch																				
<u>Operational research</u>																				
Baseline surveys					=====															
Information system					=====															
<u>Monitoring and evaluation</u>																				
Monitoring																				
Review									===			===			===					
Evaluation																				=====