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THE CONTRIBUTION OF A WHO ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER  
IN A MALARIA ERADICATION PROGRAMME

by

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INTRODUCTION

As is well known, a malaria eradication programme is time-limited in nature for various technical reasons. This means that, in principle, no delay whatsoever should hinder the activities of a such programme.

It is also well known that the tempo of routine public health administration with its network of rules and regulations is not tuned to the requirements of a programme like malaria eradication which is operated according to a time-exacting schedule.

It seems that the amount of work attributed to the malaria eradication teams has been underestimated since the beginning of the implementation of Malaria Eradication.

Originally the WHO expert teams were composed of malariologists, entomologists, sanitarians, and occasionally of technicians. The gamut of experience of various WHO experts engaged in malaria eradication indicated that most of the difficulties encountered in malaria eradication programmes were of an administrative nature and that the time the experts should devote to their work has been encroached upon by various interwoven administrative problems which could not be foreseen at the start.

A malaria eradication programme is planned to be implemented on a country wide basis and needs as much autonomy as possible. In many countries, this is not the case and administrative decisions are taken through the usual channels; hence the ensuing delays which jeopardize the smooth running of the operations according to schedule.

One of the most important requirements before launching any malaria eradication programme is to explain to all public health authorities the nature of this time-consuming programme which is patterned along the same principles which govern war-like operations, and which cannot tolerate delays in executing administrative directives, financial sanctioning and administering of already approved funds, and personnel management.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER IN RELATION TO MALARIA ERADICATION PROJECT

The idea of assigning an administrative officer to malaria eradication teams has progressively developed in order to relieve the technical members of a team from the burden of various time-absorbing administrative activities, thus allowing them to concentrate on the technical side of the programme.

These activities could be classified under the following headings:

- (a) Advising and training nationals on supplies planning, requisitioning and storage.
- (b) Advising and training on budget planning (according to technical considerations), finance and accounting procedures.
- (c) Advising and training on personnel matters.
- (d) Advising and training on transport organization.
- (e) Advising and training on organization of internal administration in Malaria Eradication Departments and Centres.
- (f) Contacts with Public Administrations.
- (g) Advise the provincial Centres on all administrative difficulties.

The above-mentioned items are detailed here below:

#### (a) Supplies:

Planning and requesting supplies needs a thorough study of the technical aspects of the programme in order not to be faced by a lack or delay of some supplies. Procurement of supplies takes usually six months and sometimes exceeds a year.

Requisitions for vehicles and spare parts should be initiated by a man who is experienced in mechanical matters which is not the case among most of the technical experts in the field of Health activities.

Receiving procedures should be strictly followed in order to ensure proper entrance in inventories and stock control, thus giving at any time a correct situation.

Customs formalities should be followed up in order not to delay the supplies to the programme.

Advice should be given on the planning of the distribution of the supplies to the different provinces of the country, according to the technical needs.

(b) Budget and Financial Matters

Laws and rules governing these two branches are usually very complicated in the public administrations.

Approvals for expenditures are delayed by procedures and controls.

The follow up of all these matters takes a considerable time and should not be left to a normal "routine administration".

Advice on the preparation of the budgets and estimates for the project.

Advice on planning, implementing and evaluating the activities.

Advice on proper budget control system.

(c) Personnel Matters

Advice on the distribution of personnel all over the country according to the needs of the programme as well as advice concerning the methods of selection is of great importance in order to raise up the usual standard of work.

Advice on setting up a proper personnel record filing system.

(d) Transport Organization

Advice to be given in order to ensure the good running order of the vehicles assigned to the project so that they will never cause any interruption in the programme.

Advice on the determination of the number and types of vehicles to be procured according to the needs of the programme.

Advice on procurement of spare parts and stock control system.

Advice on maintenance and inspection system.

Advice on running cost control.

Advice on proper despatch organization in order to provide the project with the best use of the fleet, thus saving abnormal expenditures.

(e) Internal Administration of National Malaria Eradication Departments.

Organization of clerical work of the WHO Advisers and dealing with personnel matters directly connected with the regional office of WHO Advice on administrative procedures in order to avoid delays. Organization, planning and advice on registration and filing systems in order that technical, administrative, financial and statistical data will always be kept in a very facility, and their compilation and tabulation whenever needed.

(f) Contact with Public Administrations

Work in close contact with the different sections of the Ministries related to Malaria Eradication Department in order to obtain good collaboration and the acceleration of the work to reach decisions in the shortest possible time.

Follow up with the Officials the results of the different requests.

(g) Advice To the Provincial Centres

Whilst travelling on field trips, study in close contact with the Medical Officers in charge of the different centres all difficulties related to administration as well as transport and supplies and advice about their settlement.

CORRELATION OF THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES WITH THE RESULTS OBTAINED IN SYRIA

In Syria the Malaria Eradication Project was subjected since early 1956 to considerable administrative difficulties which have led to a prolongation of the time previously planned for implementing the plan of operation.

The Senior Adviser was obliged to spend considerable time in helping to solve administrative problems, thus overloading himself with various tasks that did not allow his full use of the time in advising and follow up of the technical aspects of the programme.

Since the arrival of a WHO Administrative Officer in the project, transport, finance, storage, budgetary and financial problems were handled by him, following the above-mentioned basic procedures and thus the technical aspects were relieved, allowing them to devote more time to their normal activities.

It is worthwhile to mention that the assignment of an Administrative Officer early after the preliminary results of a pre-eradication project are compiled, is a necessity in order that the plans made for a project will be fulfilled in time and not necessitate further extension.