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ADMINISTRATION IN THE PLANNING AND EXECUTION  
OF MALARIA ERADICATION PROGRAMMES

by

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The importance of administration in any campaign of malaria eradication has been repeatedly emphasized by various expert bodies and in particular the recommendations of the sixth Expert Committee on Malaria have placed particular emphasis on the vital need for strong administrative supporting services without which the technical strategy of malaria eradication would be seriously hampered.

Experience during the last few years had demonstrated that plans of operation for malaria eradication are inevitably less sound when fundamental administrative considerations have been overlooked or insufficiently stressed during the development of these plans. In particular it can be said that however good the quality of scientific and technical know-how available to any particular project, unless the country is willing and able to fit the malaria eradication project with adequate administrative resources which allow for good management and financing, the programme quickly becomes entangled in all kinds of setbacks which not only retard the development of the campaign on efficient lines but result in the indiscriminate squandering of limited resources and involve important wastages in personnel, material and prestige. The administrative difficulties and deficiencies generally experienced are primarily related to delays and other logistical factors causing failure of total coverage. Even if governments have agreed to assume necessary commitments for the success of the programme and have fullest goodwill in the matter

it is not possible to change overnight a bureaucratic pattern which is not fit to support a countrywide operation which needs to be perfect in quality and perfectly timed.

In its sixth report the Expert Committee on Malaria recorded a large number of conclusions based on the worldwide experience of the members of that Committee. The principles stressed in this report are thoroughly consonant with sound principles of public administration. Apart from their relationship to the general science of administration it can be said that many of these principles are simply statements of the product of good sound commonsense.

Although the fundamental and basic technical standards for malaria eradication operations are uniform and are universally applicable it is obvious that no standardized form for a plan of operations is possible for all countries or for every phase of a programme directed towards eradication. Notwithstanding this fact, however, any plan of operations needs to include sufficient details to permit the evaluation of the proposed operations in administrative terms in order that administrative supporting services may be able to produce the necessary disposition of manpower and material resources at the exact time and place they are required.

In the framing of a plan of operations there are four major aspects involving administrative science which must be taken into consideration and it would be appropriate to consider these four aspects in turn, for each needs attention from the very beginning of the planning stage:

1. Constitutional and executive authority

Since the final objective of any antimalaria campaign is the eradication of the disease it is virtually self-evident that the objective can be attained only if the campaign is supported by the government and the public at all levels. Many countries have already enacted legislation in some form or another which recognizes the concept of eradication as a national gospel but there are many who have not gone so far as to recognize this problem as one requiring specific unequivocal and clearly defined laws which establish all the machinery appropriate to the attainment of the objective and the line of authority of both directing and executive personnel (at this point it may be useful to discuss particular problems on this aspect which have arisen in the Eastern Mediterranean Region).

2. Financing

A malaria eradication programme is an expensive investment which can in the last analysis only be justified by a government to its taxpayers if the accrued dividends are in proportion to the amount of capital placed in this programme. These dividends will

only finally become apparent when the malaria eradication programme has been completed, the need to spend large recurrent annual sums on malaria control has been eliminated, and the economic gain to the country results from the improved standards of health of the entire population.

Experience to date has shown that a programme which is not from the very inception of planning considered in its totality in terms of necessary financing quickly runs into difficulties due to the drying-up of sources of funds. It is no easy task for a government to estimate what exactly a total eradication programme would cost, running as it needs to do over a period of several years. However, difficult though this exercise may be it is considered that a pretty accurate estimate of such expenditure can be calculated. They would be doing themselves no service by adopting an ostrich attitude and contenting themselves with assessing the problem piecemeal. It is ultimately fruitless to embark even on the initial phases of a pilot or pre-eradication project unless the government realizes that neither of these activities serves any ultimate purpose unless they are prepared to continue the programme through to eradication and provide for the necessary financing of the totality. International assistance with the costs of national malaria eradication programmes is but a fraction of the sums which need to be found by the governments themselves.

### 3. Organization

It is generally recognized that any country planning to eradicate malaria needs a special malaria service with sufficient autonomy from other departments of the national health service to give it the necessary flexibility to coordinate and control the entire strategy of malaria operations which are essentially and fundamentally different from those employed in other types of public health campaign. The organizational structure of any project will depend upon its principal tasks and on its size and functions. This structure needs clear definition in the planning stage to ensure that the responsibility of the various sub-organization units are clearly defined and the chain of authority is firmly established.

As sound general principles of administration (a) the organizational structure must be subdivided into group activities on the basis of definite function; (b) the number of these subdivisions should be such that an effective control of them is possible; (c) provision should be made for adequate staff services to carry out the overall management and to coordinate the functions of each subdivision; (d) each subdivision should have one official in charge of it and every individual in the subdivision should be directly responsible only to his superior officer and through him to the head of the project; (e) the entire project must have well-defined lines of authority and responsibility at each of the several levels; (f) each subdivision and other person in the project must be ultimately responsible to the officer in overall charge of the project.

Experience has shown that many projects run into difficulties in the early stages of operation due to too rigid centralization of operational and administrative control. As a general principle the most adequate organizational system advisable would be one based on centralized direction of the programme and decentralized execution. In this same connexion it is a sound principle to delegate responsibility and authority to the greatest degree possible, i.e. to place at the lowest possible organizational level the responsibility and authority to act in order to obtain decisions speedily. This principle of delegation of responsibility and authority should be followed to the utmost extent consistent with efficiency and coordination of policy.

#### 4. Manpower and training

The manpower requirements of any programme will vary according to the operations to be carried out but already in the initial stages of planning an assessment of the number, quality and type of personnel needed should be calculated. The general philosophy of manpower related to malaria eradication programmes is well stated in pages twenty-four through thirty of the sixth Report of the Expert Committee on Malaria. Some general principles are given below related to some fundamental considerations of personnel administration on the recruitment and selection, training and promotion of personnel.

##### (a) Recruitment and selection

As regards the duties to be performed by each category of worker, these should be accurately described in terms of the various types of work to be performed, due account being taken of the skills involved at the various levels. Adequate rates of pay based upon the principle of equal pay for equal work and equal responsibilities should be provided for each class of position. In order to avoid nepotism and the like a country should have established some organized system of selection so that only persons qualified as suitable through experience and training are appointed to the respective positions in the malaria eradication service.

##### (b) Training

As regards training, the best work comes from those who fully understand the purpose of their work and its relationship to a total programme. To fulfil this objective adequate facilities for the training of all personnel should be provided, and provided for within the time table for planned operations so that the trained personnel are ready when the operations are ready to be carried out. The kind of training should include not only the technical subjects appropriate to the functions and future duties of the trainees, the discovery of their aptitudes and qualifications for eventual reassignment or promotion, but

also such subjects as may be pertinent to the future usefulness of the persons being trained in case the need for their current services should come to an end.

Good supervision requires adequate knowledge, on the part of the supervisor, of the purpose to be achieved and the role to be played by each of the subordinates in the common effort. Employees should be led and not driven. Good supervision involves delegation of responsibility and authority to subordinates. In any well-organized training programme provision for careful selection and training of both management and supervisory personnel is essential.

(c) Transfer, promotion and separation

As a good general principle insofar as this is practicable the transfer of personnel within the service, their promotion and their separation should be made only for the benefit of the service, and if the work is impaired by the incompetence of any worker he should be promptly removed.