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OF SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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INTER-COUNTRY AND INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE
PROMOTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMMES IN AFGHANISTAN

by

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INTRODUCTION

Developing countries including our country Afghanistan are characterized by features that may be present in various degrees according to their stage of development.

There are numerous factors for their health problems which need co-operation and co-ordination with other sectors in the country, e.g. :

Factors that limit or hamper communication between regions, between sectors of activities or between social groups.

In health field the consequences are:

The difficulty of educating an illiterate population in health matters.

The limited ability of marketing structure to provide the population with supplies adequate to their needs.

The outmoded agrarian structure which impedes the production of food and affects nutrition.

The uneven economic development which results in low living standard that even the more elementary health needs cannot be met.

Geographical situation of a country which may affect the promotion of health programmes in that country or create more tasks in the promotion of health programmes.

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COOPERATION OF HEALTH PROGRAMMES IN AFGHANISTAN

Participation of different sectors in Promotion of Public Health Programmes in Afghanistan

In this country public health services are sponsored mainly by the Ministry of Health of Royal Afghan Government.

This Ministry with its central provincial organization and institutions are dealing with most of the health problems of the country. They are offering curative and prophylactic services for the country usually free of charge.

Moreover, some other ministries and sectors are involved in this programme to some extent, e.g

Ministry of Defense.

Ministry of Education (by training and running training institutions and hospitals).

Ministry of Agriculture (by its veterinary in prevention, control and eradication of zoonosis, provision of food products).

On the same way other ministries are helping indirectly (Planning, Finance, Mines and Industry).

Voluntary Agencies like Red-Crescent, etc. etc.

Private sectors like factories and private practitioners.

Cooperation in Training of Health Workers in Afghanistan

Medical doctors are usually trained by the Universities of the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Health is sharing this programme by providing facilities for doctors, stagiaires, etc in its Public Health Institute and also by part-time teachers from her staff.

Most of paramedical workers like Sanitarians, Laboratory Technologists, X-ray Technicians, Dentists, Nurses, Compounders and other auxiliaries like vaccinators are trained by the Ministry of Public Health.

Close cooperation between different sectors of the country for control of Communicable Diseases

Aware of their divided obligations and proving their solidarity whenever confronted with problems of national importance, twenty-three delegates representing the various walks and activities in the country, have answered to the call of Her Excellency the Minister of Health and have joined the NATIONAL BOARD FOR THE CONTROL & PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, in March 1967.

This Board has the following organization.

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Rapporteur

Membership:

Ministry of Health
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Interior
Ministry of Information and Culture
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Communication
Red Crescent Society
Bus Services
Ariana Air Service.

This Board has also the following technical sub-committees:

The Smallpox and VD Sub-Committee

The Chairman
The Vice Chairman
Secretary
Members
Advisers.

The Cholera and Enteric Diseases Sub-Committee

The Chairman
The Vice Chairman
Secretary
Members
Adviser.

The Respiratory Diseases Committee

The Chairman
The Vice Chairman
Secretary
Members
Advisers.

The Rickettsial De-Malaria & Leishmania Committee

The Chairman
The Vice Chairman
Secretary
Members
Advisers.

Tentatively, the duties of the sub-committees are summarized as follows:

1. To collect and to study basic information of the disease pattern in the country.
2. To collect and to study data and information about the natural ways and methods of transmission of communicable diseases in the country.
3. To consider and to propose realistic methods for the prevention and control of C.D. that can be prevented.
4. To advise the National Board of Public Health issues relating to Communicable Diseases.

The sub-committees are meeting once a fortnight or so, and the studies, observations, recommendations and deliberations of the sub-committee in a report is submitted quarterly to the National Board.

The National Board is meeting quarterly to study these reports to discuss the scientific, economic and feasible ways of its application of and other important aspects of C.D. Control and final suggestion and advices are submitted to the responsible sectors

Inter-Country Co-operation

Countries that are in one region especially neighbouring countries can co-operate with each other in many ways in order to solve their health problems. This co-operation is very much important for the control and eradication of C.D. like malaria, smallpox, cholera, etc.

The open border and uncontrollable nomadic movement between some countries make it difficult or even impossible to eradicate these diseases if there is no collaboration between these two countries.

Frequent meetings, formal and informal contacts between different health workers of the two or more countries are essential for promotion of health programmes.

In the same way, arranging seminars, short-time training courses, etc. is another way for promotion between countries of a region.

INTER-REGIONAL COOPERATION

Afghanistan since the beginning of her membership to SEARO, has utilized satisfactorily the co-operation of Region Member through WHO Regional Office. But the difficulty was that Afghanistan was surrounded by countries which were in another Region of WHO: EMRO.

There is no doubt that the inter-regional cooperation will be achieved in this way when the countries of the region have similarities in:

Geographical situation
Similarity of health problems
Economic conditions
Similarity of administrative conditions and
Relationship between the regions and
international organizations.

We hope that when we are moving from SEARO to EMRO it does not mean that we are cutting completely our co-operation with the countries of the former, still we are co-operating with them as a member of WHO and we accept their co-operation too.

In the same way, we hope that our joining EMRO would be more fruitful and that we gain more co-operation with friendly countries of this region for solving public health problems.

Change of information and methodology between two regions in different public health problems, as a good way of looking for the solutions of these problems, e.g. the experience in one region for a particular health problem like cholera or smallpox would be very valuable for another region, of the help of advanced organization in one region like PAHO would be very much useful and valuable for the promotion of health programmes in a developing country in another region.

In the same way different institutions in different regions can cooperate with each other. In many health problems we have to mention that our Public Health Institute in Kabul is ready and happy to cooperate with any institution in any region which is willing to do so.

We wish that our institute would be included in the list of WHO regional institutions and we hope to benefit from the experiences and information of other regional institutions.

THE ROLE OF WHO IN THIS FIELD

Since the beginning of membership of Afghanistan to WHO, we have benefited in different projects of our country, e.g.:

Malaria Eradication Programme (Afghanistan 0011)
Public Health Institute (Afghanistan 0031)
Nurse Education (Afghanistan 0035, 0068)
Statistics (Afghanistan 0031)
Sanitation (Afghanistan 1004, 0061, 0066, etc.)

Also WHO has assisted in training our medical workers in the country by arranging refresher courses, seminars, etc. or abroad by sending our personnel for fellowships, etc.

Future Expectations

We hope that WHO will realize more our difficulties in promoting our health programmes and will increase its valuable help for our country.

We need equipment and material for our health institutions
We need training of our medical doctors and different health workers and
we need experienced and co-operative advisers

As WHO has a great share in promotion of health programmes of Afghanistan, for which we are thankful, we are encouraged to draw the attention of WHO to the following:

1. The rural development department was formerly functioning under the Ministry of Interior, now the public health aspect of it is completely connected to the Ministry of Health, to the Basic Health Services. Any kind of help in this connection would be appreciated.
2. The serious outbreak of cholera, largely cholera El Tor in 1965 and treating of it thereafter made heavy demands on the resources of the national health services. The Ministry of Health launched a wide surveillance programme since 1967 throughout Afghanistan. Share of WHO was remarkable in this programme and we wish continuation of it.
3. On Diphteria Surveillance which was started since the beginning of 1966 in the Public Health Institute, Kabul, it seems that diphteria is a problem for Afghanistan and needs immediate attention. A pilot project for vaccination was started in 1968 to which WHO was actively participating. Some vaccine was provided by WHO and their experts were helping. The experiences gained in this project are encouraging and we hope that WHO would take more part in this project.
4. WHO was cooperating with an international team, primarily in assisting in the development and coordination of plans for urban water supplies and drainage system. We need more help in this respect.
5. For the promotion of health programmes we need different categories of health workers. At present the capacity of our training is not sufficient for this need. On the other hand, there are numerous graduates from colleges. **Absorbing them is a problem.** So the Ministry of Health is planning to establish a School of Public Health in the Public Health Institute for training public health doctors, medical superintendents, etc. to cope with this problem. **Negotiations are carried out between** the University of Kabul and the Ministry of Health.

In this way, from one side we are preserving our scientific staff who are taking care of administrative works and from the other side we would absorb the graduate asking for a job. So if WHO is recognizing our Institute i.e. P.H I as one of its regional training facilities, we would be grateful.