

AS UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali stressed at the 28 November-2 December World NGO forum in Valletta, Malta, to launch the Year, "The International Year of the Family should help in the promotion of human rights, especially the rights of the child, individual freedoms and gender equality, both in the family context and in society at large." It is important to reinforce the family's inherent internal strengths to enable its members to realize their full potential.

It is of the utmost importance that parents — with the assistance of social support systems — be enabled to meet their responsibilities in their work and to their families. Maternity leave, child care and care for the elderly and infirm are some of the approaches that can help facilitate this. It is imperative that parents be assured that they will not be penalized in terms of job security or promotions for meeting their family obligations.

The Year's objectives are:

- To increase awareness of family issues among Governments and the private sector;
- To strengthen national institutions in their efforts to develop, carry out and monitor family policies;
- To stimulate efforts to address family-related problems;
- To enhance the effectiveness of local, regional and national family programmes;
- To improve cooperation among national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and
- To build upon ongoing activities benefiting women, children, youth and ageing and disabled persons.

Governments, voluntary organizations and the private sector are expected to promote new awareness of problems — and solutions — to the multiple crises of families. They will undertake specific activities and observances at the local, regional and national levels, assisted by the United Nations and its system of organizations.

Preparations undertaken

As many Governments and organizations have begun preparations and initiated observances, national coordinating bodies have been established in over 100 countries, national programmes of action are being developed in over 90 nations, and 94 Governments have designated national focal points on the IYF. Several countries have already identified priorities, started national programmes and begun information campaigns.

The General Assembly has invited NGOs to exert all possible efforts to prepare for and observe the Year and to cooperate with the United Nations to achieve the Year's goals. Many NGOs are fully involved



International Year of the Family

in the Year's preparations, just as they were a major impetus in its proclamation. Several NGOs are bringing the Year's message to community organizations, the general public and families themselves, using their wide network of contacts and channels of communication. Others are organizing special meetings on the Year.

A major NGO initiative, the World NGO Forum on Launching the International Year of the Family (Valletta, Malta, 28 November-2 December), marked the beginning of the observance of the Year. It was



A single parent family means a greater burden on the parent to feed, shelter and educate the child. — UNICEF

organized by the Vienna NGO Committee on the Family in collaboration with its counterparts in New York and Paris. The Forum's theme was "Promoting Families for the Well-being of Individuals and Societies".

The changing family structure
Happy families are all

Family : Fundamental Building Blocks of Society

The International Day of Families was observed for the first time on 15 May 1994, during the International Year of the Family (IYF). Proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, this annual observance will build on the momentum to strengthen families which has been generated by the International Year. For 1994, the Day's theme is "Building the Smallest Democracy at the Heart of Society".

Families — the fundamental building blocks of any society — face unprecedented and varied challenges: urbanization, drug abuse, poverty, unemployment and political unrest, as well as changing economic and social conditions. Yet the family is the individual's primary source of emotional and material support. It serves as the foundation for child development and, as such, holds the key to the solution of many of society's problems. The family therefore deserves priority attention.

alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

The family is a universal phenomenon, and the concept of the family is perhaps the most basic one in social life.

But families manifest themselves in widely different forms and functions. Perceptions of the role of the family vary among societies and cultures. There is no single view of the family, nor can there be a universally applicable definition. Indeed, one of the major attributes of the family is its diversity.

triarchal, or male-dominated. One example of the male-dominated family is the description of the family given in the Old Testament, where the male heads of the clan were allowed to have several wives as well as concubines. As a general rule, the women of the Old Testament had a rather low status.

The industrial revolution spawned great changes in family structure. Industrialization and urbanization led to the breakup of the large feudal estates and prompted a sharp change in life and working styles. Many people, especially unmarried youths, left the farms and went to the cities to work in the factories. This process led to the dissolution of many extended families.

At the same time, patriarchal rule slowly gave way to a greater equality between the sexes. Stereotyping of male and female roles within the family broke down. No longer was caring for the home and

tended family is being replaced by the nuclear family, as societies become more and more industrialized and urbanized. And the nuclear family itself is changing, with the advances of equality between the sexes, new technologies facilitating child-bearing, and economic changes which provide women with independent sources of sustenance.

At the same time, non-traditional family types are becoming more and more common, such as cohabitation, same-gender relationships, single-parent families and re-organized families.

The family's role in socializing youth

The basic educational institution — the family — provides the fundamental apprenticeship for life. Under the right conditions, it prepares young people to realize their potential and assume useful roles as adults in society. However, the relationship of today's young

people with the order generation, and in particular with their families, has become increasingly fragile. The socialization of youth is no longer a simple transmission of accepted values and attitudes.

Each individual's life is shaped by cultural norms and values and by social interaction. The family is at the core of this process and bears the primary responsibility for the socialization of youth. It is within the family, with all its echoing relationships, its reflections of a larger world, and its responsiveness to the internal world of each of its members, that the initial learning by each individual takes place.

"Learning begins at birth" is an undisputed concept: it is well established that the period from birth to the age of six is critical in the formation of intelligence, personality and social behaviour. It is in the family that the child's self-understanding and self-esteem are developed. The learning that occurs in the early months and years of life will either enhance or handicap learning throughout later life.

Tradition and change

The family is responsible for transmitting social and cul-

children the exclusive duty of women, nor earning a living and pursuing a public life the exclusive domain of men. Many wives started working outside the home, just as many husbands started sharing the duties involved in maintaining a household.

The changing family

This transformation of the structure of the family continues today, as families are undergoing rapid changes all over the world. Although such changes differ from region to region, there are some common traits: small nuclear families, the greater longevity of family members, and the transformation of relationships within the family due to changing values.

Other changes are under way. Formalized marriage is losing its status, and divorce has increased in almost all countries where it is estimated that one third of all families are now single parent families headed by a woman.

Traditional definitions of family structure tended to be based on two major types — the nuclear and the extended family. But these are undergoing changes, while new family types are emerging. In many countries the ex-

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The family — providing the fundamental apprenticeship for life — Photo credit: Down with Stereotypes! — Unesco

plex ways. The impact of children's behaviour on their parents' personalities should not be forgotten. Children also socialize their parents in many ways. Parents learn from their children about child development, peer and sibling relationship, school, fashion and changes in society. Children serve as carriers of emerging trends, through their exposure to schools, peers and the media. In particular, immigrant and refugee parents often learn their new country's language, customs and culture from their children.

Family and education
In modern societies, the family has been performing a

fundamental role in education. Despite growing support for the view that education is an essential right of all individuals, the decisions of parents still play a pivotal role in determining the amount and quality of education that any child receives, either formally or informally.

Several factors play a role in these decisions, including the economic situation of parents, their social traditions, their degree of exposure to the forces of modernization, and their level of appreciation of the importance of schooling, as well as their general attitudes to the values that education should impart.

In cultures where education is highly valued, it has been observed that a stable family system is a major factor in encouraging children to acquire education. In contrast, the decline in educational attainment in some countries has been in

with the early social maturation of youth, their ability to earn incomes independently of the family, and the development of a youth culture, have all diminished the influence of the family in the socialization process. Schools, peer groups and television all compete with the family in the socialization function.

At the same time, new educational technologies, particularly the introduction of computer science and computer-aided instruction in schools and universities, along with the increasing variety of video and audio equipment and programmes, are changing the socialization process during school years in ways that are still being explored.

These changes are often so rapid that parents are not able to identify with their children's educational experience. Parents then face severe challenges attempting to play a supportive role in educating their children in a changed and fluid educational environment.

Another challenge is posed by single parenthood, which places a greater burden on the parent to feed, shelter and educate children, as well as provide emotional support, often without the assistance of the other parent or indeed the State.

The current financial crisis faced by many countries limits the extent of their commitment to families and education. But even in times of financial difficulty, it would be short-sighted to reduce that commitment, because education is the main way to build up the future of the child and society.

The United Nations has been increasingly concerned with such issues, and is, for instance, assisting Governments, particularly in developing countries, in formulating national policies which include measures to support the socialization function of the family.

The year 1995 — the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations — will see three major events in the social domain: the World Summit for Social Development, the Ninth Congress on Crime Prevention and the Treatment of Offenders and the Fourth World Conference on Women. That year will also mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family, observed by the United Nations in 1985. Following the International Year of the Family in 1994, 1995 will provide the United Nations, in cooperation with the many organizations dealing with youth issues, yet another occasion for assessing existing global activities and launching new ones to strengthen youth-related concerns.

— United Nations Department of Information.

WORLDVIEW International Foundation commonly known as Worldview is an international development country based non-governmental organization committed to sustainable development utilizing communication as a key approach. The global policy of Worldview is "to effectively employ all forms of communication methods in support of human development towards sustainability, and for meeting basic needs of the underprivileged in the development process."

It set about with its developmental endeavor in the year 1979 with the trust that a process of development communication and the participation of the mass people are the prerequisites of successful development. It has, in its 14 years of project work, demonstrated how the communication approach through participatory methods can relieve the worst and most intractable problems of the poor, where 'top-down' development initiatives have repeatedly failed. This participatory approach followed by Worldview and its 52 partner countries with over 300 professional members who work mostly in developing nations, should be seen as an alternative to 'input based' projects. Participation is in itself already an explicit development objective.

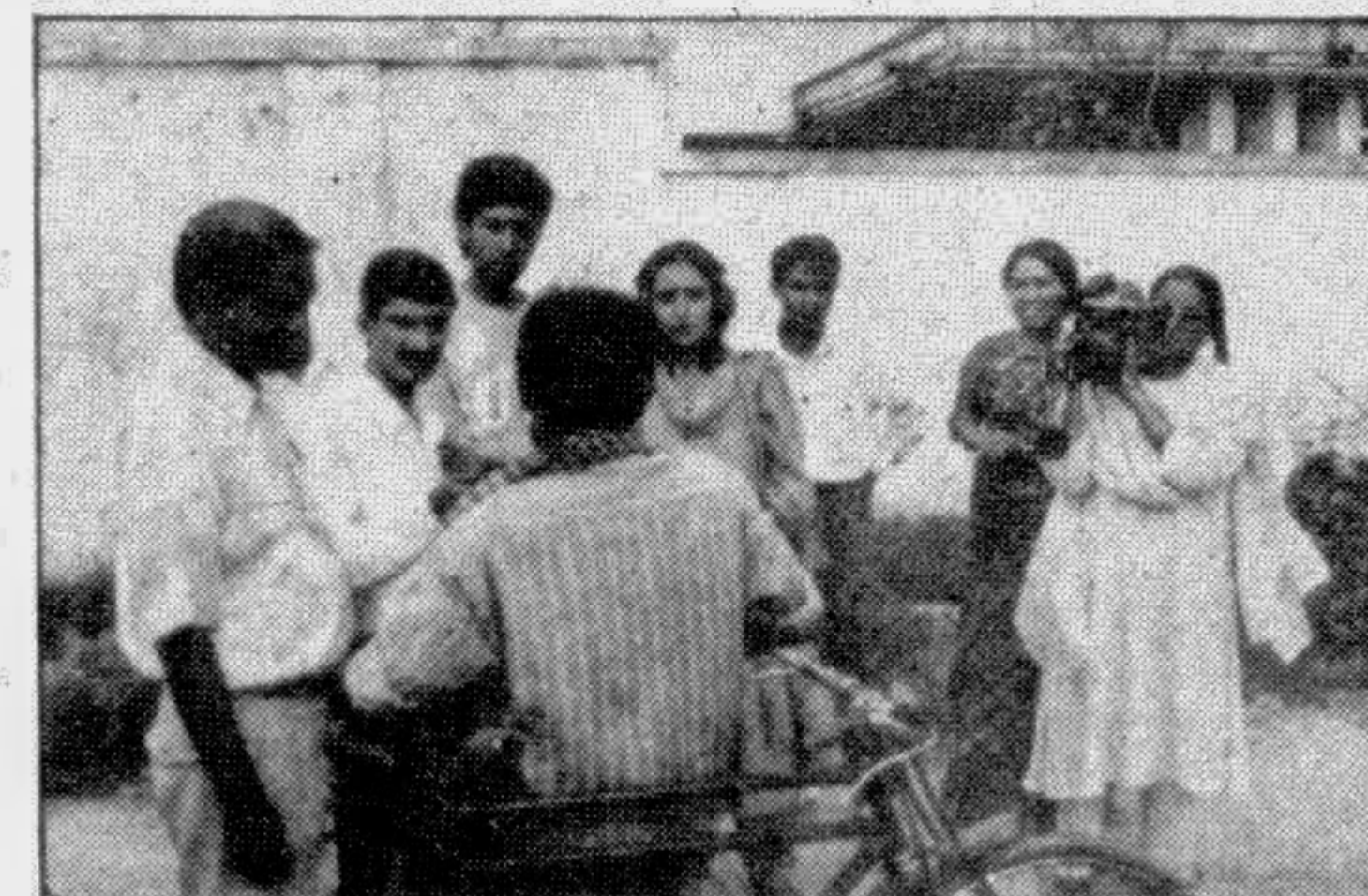
Worldview has mobilized rural communities in development initiatives through non-formal communication techniques as well as through the use of mass media such as television and radio. It has also trained development workers in multi-media skills, enhancing the responsiveness of development agencies and programmes to local needs and resources and building up indigenous capacity for the long-term sustainability of development projects in nutrition, health, AIDS awareness, food security, the environment, economic empowerment and narcotic drugs crop replacement.

The organization operates through a global network of its nine media centers in developing countries in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Worldview enjoys consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

The need to strengthen the global communication on sustainable development issues and to create a better balance in the flow of information between North and South has actuated Worldview to establish a global TV network with its base in the South. Creating a network of global dimensions is beyond the scope of any single organization. Therefore, Worldview has formed a consortium of six professional media NGOs, including the Inter Press Service (IPS), Instituto para America Latina, and the Press Foundation of Asia. Although it is initially launched with a modest budget, the Global Television Network is a major project of Worldview.

Worldview in Bangladesh
Worldview-Bangladesh has been in existence for more than 12 years and is working in the field of development communication using different traditional and modern multi-media approaches.

Initially, in 1981 Worldview-Bangladesh was established as a small unit to extend support to the Bangladesh Institute of Distant Education (BIDE) under Ministry of Education, which is now developed into the Open University of Bangladesh, in their educational TV programmes and



An outdoor practice shooting done by the participants of PVU Training Programme

trainings. Since then it has grown gradually and steadily, attained maturity and achieved its basic objectives of building confidence and raising the standard of life of the people through information media, educational and motivational programmes. Being largely a

Communication through Progress

by Shoeb Shazzad Khan

developmental video production unit, Worldview-Bangladesh has expanded its activities in other areas of development communication and training. These activities have enabled the organization to develop expertise in the field of communication material development, communication training, communication research and communication consultancy for sustainable development. With the view to attaining its objectives, Worldview has been undertaking four long term programmes leading to sustainable development: 1) Media Production Unit (MPU), 2) Nutritional Blindness Prevention Programme (NBPP), 3) Communication Training and Material Development Project (CTMD-P) and 4) Participatory Video Unit (PVU).

During the current phase Worldview-Bangladesh is planning to intensify its activities in the field of communication media, child development, environment, anti-drug, economic emancipation of the poor etc.

Media Production Unit (MPU)

Development is a widely participated process change in

the dissemination of development messages right to the target people in a very lucid manner. At the present context of the world, media can play a vital role in carrying development messages to the door-step of the community people. With this aim in view, the Media Production Unit (MPU) was established in 1981 in Bangladesh. The activities are aimed at providing production facilities for development oriented videos, technical assistance and training to various organizations working with rural poor like Grameen Bank, ILO, World Bank, Unicef, CARE-Bangladesh, BRAC, WFP, WHO, UNFPA, UNDP, ICDDR, etc., so that the staff members of these organizations can develop their communication skills to carry out developmental work effectively.

The MPU is equipped with modern electronic audio-visual equipments with highly professional personnel. It helps generate participatory processes of planning and development in which the suffering poor will be creative participants rather than passive onlookers.

The Unit has so far produced more than 250 motivational and educational videos on health care, nutrition, food production etc some of which received international recognition and coveted awards as mentioned earlier. Moreover, a good number of documentaries have been shown on Bangladesh Television and on international television network. It can also be mentioned here that the Information Minister Nazmul Huda announced at a programme organized by Sandhani on the 26th September 1993 the enlistment of Worldview-Bangladesh in BTV for pioneering role in the field of development. Earlier, Worldview produced a tele-film on posthumous eye donation for Sandhani, totally free of cost.

The MPU has the following prime objectives: a) Education services, video services and TV productions for Government and Non-government organizations; b) Motivational, histori-

cal, cultural educational and development oriented videos for different organizations and field projects, c) Educating and motivating less privileged people in health care, nutrition, hygiene, food production, environment etc.

Nutritional Blindness Prevention Programme (NBPP)

Bangladesh is one of the least developed countries in the world. Eighty per cent of its 110 million people live below the poverty line and more than 60 per cent suffer from malnutrition. Eye signs and symptoms of vitamin A deficiency, in other words xerophthalmia, which causes night blindness in early childhood, usually accompanied by protein-energy malnutrition, are at the highest levels for any country worldwide. Although there are regional variations, the population of all age groups in Bangladesh is affected by xerophthalmia. But the loss of sight is found mainly in pre-school age children.

The Bangladesh Nutritional Blindness Study (HKI and IPHN, 1985) found that 30 out of 1,000 pre-school age children up to 6 years were night blind. It was estimated that nearly four per cent of all children in Bangladesh developed corneal damage before reaching the age of six years. It was also estimated that in Bangladesh one million children suffer from eye diseases, and 36,000 go blind every year due to vitamin A deficiency in their diets (UNICEF, 1990). Of those going blind, at least 50 per cent die within one year of the blinding episode. Some of the contributing factors leading to night blindness include late weaning practices, food taboos, and mothers' ignorance of the sources and value of vitamin A.

The project was then expanded gradually with the proven successful communication approaches like school, folk song, radio and television, documentary film show, cinema, billboard, pictorial print material, Government and NGO worker, etc to the districts of Rangpur, Gaibandha, Dinajpur and Lalmonirhat with

financial assistance from SMF of Norway, SIDA (Swedish) and NOVIB of the Netherlands. It is worth mentioning that Lalmonirhat district programme is being run totally by women.

Till now a host of evaluations on this programme were conducted by Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR), Institute of Nutrition



Home Gardening Activity done by a village woman under NBPP Project

and Food Science (INFS) Dhaka University and Helen Keller International (HKI) in Bangladesh. Apart from this (SMF) sent evaluators from Norway.

The result is encouraging: The nutritional blindness rate per 100 household came down to 2.69 in 1990 from 5.37 found in a base-line study in 1987 conducted by ISWR. Not only that, a remarkable achievement was found in some set targets, like: The awareness about night blindness increased by 94 per cent as against target 80 per cent. The education to grow Vitamin A rich vegetables increased by 71 per cent as against target 60 per cent and the education to grow Vitamin A rich nutritious fruits increased by 44.66 per cent as against target 40 per cent.

Communication Training and Material Development Project (CTMD-P)

With the emergence of participatory approaches in development, communication is day by day becoming a social pro-

cess in the realization of developmental activities. Communication is now being considered as a combination of training, media utilization, research, evaluation, monitoring of information etc based on a process of analysis and supported by innovative, creative techniques to facilitate, encourage and promoted behavioral change.

Worldview-Bangladesh started a training project called 'Communication Training and

Material Development Project (CTMD-P)' in April 1986 in collaboration with UNICEF. The project has designed, development and implemented a number of training courses on various aspects of the Training Process and Development Communication including Audio Visual techniques. On the basis of a Training Need Assessment Study, the project has also conducted a series of Training of Trainers (TOT) for many Government and Non-Government Organizations implementing various development activities.

CTMD-P has also undertaken a field training project at Mirjapur on the use of safe drinking water, sanitation and personal hygiene in collaboration with World Bank.

Future Plans of CTMD-P are: a) To update its training module in the line with modern training technique and integrate participatory video as a training tool in development communication. b) To make the project more field oriented. c) To make the training more participatory through group discussion and facilitation.

tion. d) To strengthen the need assessment and evaluation system in the training courses. e) To introduce audio-video in participatory planning technique. f) To arrange higher training for professional staff members.

Participatory Video Unit (PVU)

Participatory communication between individuals, between ethnic and religious groups and between countries is vitally important to raise awareness and to mobilize people to tackle complex development problems.

However, the means of modern communication such as telephone, fax, electronic mail, radio, television, satellite etc are highly technologically sophisticated. Access to these means of communication is a source of power. However, there is a wide disparity between those who enjoy such means and those who do not.

Those who possess neither the technical skills nor the communication equipment are consequently staying in considerably disadvantaged position in raising awareness and mobilizing people to change adverse status of their life. Without information of the means of communication, they remain invisible, undiscovered, deprived and assetless.

In this context video is a very strong development tool. It is simple easy to learn and operate, compact, requires no processing, can play back and forth as and when necessary, and is becoming increasingly cost-effective. Although it is not a substitute for face-to-face communication, still it has immense potential to motivate and empower the voiceless to speak for themselves.

Organizations working in the field of development in both developing and developed countries therefore have started utilizing Audio-Visual techniques by using video cassette recorders, which have shown great promise in the promotion of participatory communication. This is an approach which we call 'Participatory Video'. Participatory video allows ordinary people to create their own programmes covering their own local issues and concerns in order to influence others and stimulate change. It is a tool enabling the poor to speak for themselves.