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INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE CENTRE  
FOR CLEAN WATER SUPPLY AND  
SANITATION (IRC)

Draft

## **"Guidelines for Communication Materials on Improved Sanitation in China"**

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IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre

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134-95GU-13036

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ISBN 13031  
LO: 134 9560

## ***Contents***

1. Introduction
2. Communication strategy
  - 2.1 Analysis
  - 2.2 Planning and programming
  - 2.3 Message development, pretesting and revision
  - 2.4 Implementation, monitoring and assessment
  - 2.5 Evaluation

### **Appendices**

1. RAP Survey report about Facts for Life Communication Activity in Queshan County, Henan Province. 1992
2. Report on the survey of the requirements of Facts for Life Communication and Health Education Resources in Queshan County. 1993
3. Communication materials used in Henan province
4. Videos for latrine promotion in Henan
5. Suggested outline for video
6. Other communication tools suggestions

## ***1. Introduction***

From 1989 to 1994 improved latrines have been constructed in nearly five million households in Henan province, as part of the Provincial Health Campaign Committee's promotion campaign for the double jar, funnel-shaped latrine. The experiences in this province have been documented in "Has the latrine promotion in Henan province been a success? And what can China learn from it?". This case study was prepared in a consultation mission to China from 28 December 1994 - 26 January 1995.

A second part of the mission to China concerned guidance for a strategy for communication materials which could be developed out of the Henan experience for wider promotion of sanitation improvement in China. At the end of the first week it became clear that the planned national advocacy meeting will not take place in 1995. Instead, UNICEF will help organize four provincial advocacy for sanitation meetings in the provinces where the UNICEF WES Programme is active. The communication advice provided below has been adjusted to this new situation.

In the last week of the mission it was not possible to meet with a government communication specialist who would be involved in the further development and testing of sanitation communication tools for the planned advocacy meetings. The first of those meetings is scheduled for April.

### **Existing research**

According to UNICEF, significant potential exists for using the mass media to communicate and advocate for health and education for women and children. Access to television is now claimed to be almost universal in urban areas. In rural areas, there was practically no television in 1980 (0.4 sets per 100 households); now one finds more than 60 TV sets per 100 rural households. Radio and wire broadcasts or community loudspeaker systems currently reach virtually every rural home (UNICEF 1993).

Proper media planning in China, however, is "an extremely frustrating task due to the lack of any credible audience data", write Prabhaker and Sauer (1994) quoting Ho and Chan in an analysis on advertising in China. "Agencies are hampered by the lack of marketing research, audience ratings, readership profiles, and so on", p 163.

Most consumers in China tend to accept, literally, the messages that reach them through various forms of advertising. "Hence, the masses react very well to basic, informative advertisements that provide product performance information in a simple descriptive format", p 167.

Advertising was ranked below personal selling and trade shows in a 1989 evaluation of the effectiveness of different communication methods used to introduce new products and services to the vast Chinese markets, p 161.

Prabhaker and Sauer stress that the decision making process in China on advertising is hierachically controlled by the Chinese Communist Party. The chart in Figure 1 also hols great relevance for the advocacy and programme communication work on improve latrined construction and use.

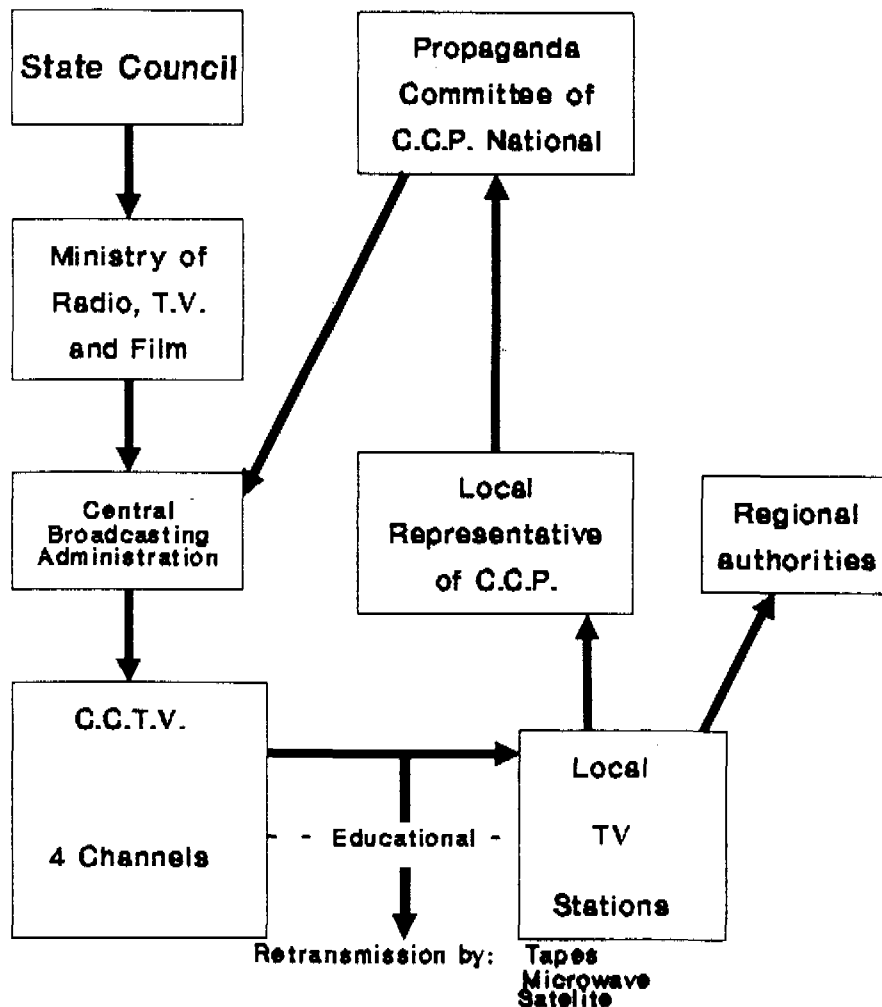


Figure 1 Decision making process within advertizing (Prabhaker and Sauer 1994).

UNICEF has done a few studies of perceptions and information sources on health, which give pointers for the effective use of materials for the selected target groups. From Knowledge, Attitude and Practice and Rapid Rural Appraisal surveys done in two WES provinces in 1994, it becomes clear that most of the Chinese people living in rural

areas perceive no danger at all from human excreta. On the contrary: "Are excreta harmful? No, it is good fertilizer", was a common answer.

Cleanliness is not perceived to be of importance. There is a strong attitude that one should stay in touch with many dirty things in order to keep up one's immunity against diseases. As a result, hand washing is not a general practice.

According to the KAP survey 62.2% of the mothers do not know that the main danger of diarrhoea is dehydration and 94% cannot correctly feed infants suffering from diarrhoea. Only 36% of the mothers regularly wash their children's hands before meals and after going to the toilet.

The RAP Survey report about the Facts for Life Communication Activity in Queshan County, Henan Province 1992, shows that TV is a major source of health information. Among the interviewed people, 61.5% received FFL information by watching TV, 35.5% by listening to a radio broadcast. In the focus group discussions it was found that the women's health knowledge mainly comes from books, doctors, TV and elderly persons.

Research on communication resources in 1993 for Facts Life revealed that the books and newspapers with 29.3% were the main sources of health knowledge, followed by TV 21.2%, health personnel 11.8%, and family members 14.7%. When asked about the most favourable sources the preference changed to TV 34.3 %, books and newspapers 32.%, others 20.6%. Of the surveyed people 36.3% watch TV several times a week, 31.1% everyday, and 63.0% never listen to the radio.

The people who have influence over mother and child care subjects are, in order of decreasing influence: doctors, teachers, peers and family members (Wang Weifeng, Zhao Qingfa 1993). For more detailed information see also Appendices 1 and 2.

### **UNICEF communication activities**

Recent UNICEF use of mass media has most often involved China National Radio. Radio campaigns have supported Expanded Programme on Immunization days, and also carried health, nutrition, child development and children's rights messages to communities across the country. In 1993, pretesting of messages was introduced to ensure relevancy to their audience. A strategy was adopted aimed at reaching the largest possible audience with frequently repeated messages during peak hours of listenership.

China's increasingly overloaded and diverse media environment presents both challenges and opportunities according to the UNICEF Information and Communications section of the 1996-2000 Programme Plan of Operations. A total of US\$ 1.8 million from general resources is being allocated for the 1996-2000 Information and Communication Plan for the National Plan of Action. The main activities include media plans for radio and TV, technical training workshops for radio and TV journalists, production of brochures, use of video producers, artists and writers. Water and environmental does not seem to be included in this, although it is one of the NPA goals.

## 2. Communication Strategy

Recent lessons from international health communication programmes combine valuable experience in social marketing with country experience on social mobilization programmes, such as nutrition, the expanded programme on immunization and more recently, sanitation. McKee's work in Bangladesh and other countries has resulted in a useful model for development communication, in which he classifies and relates a large number of activities under "Advocacy", "Social Mobilization", and "Programme Communication" (McKee 1993).

The Development Communication Model Sanitation for All in Bangladesh in the figure below illustrates how the three components work.

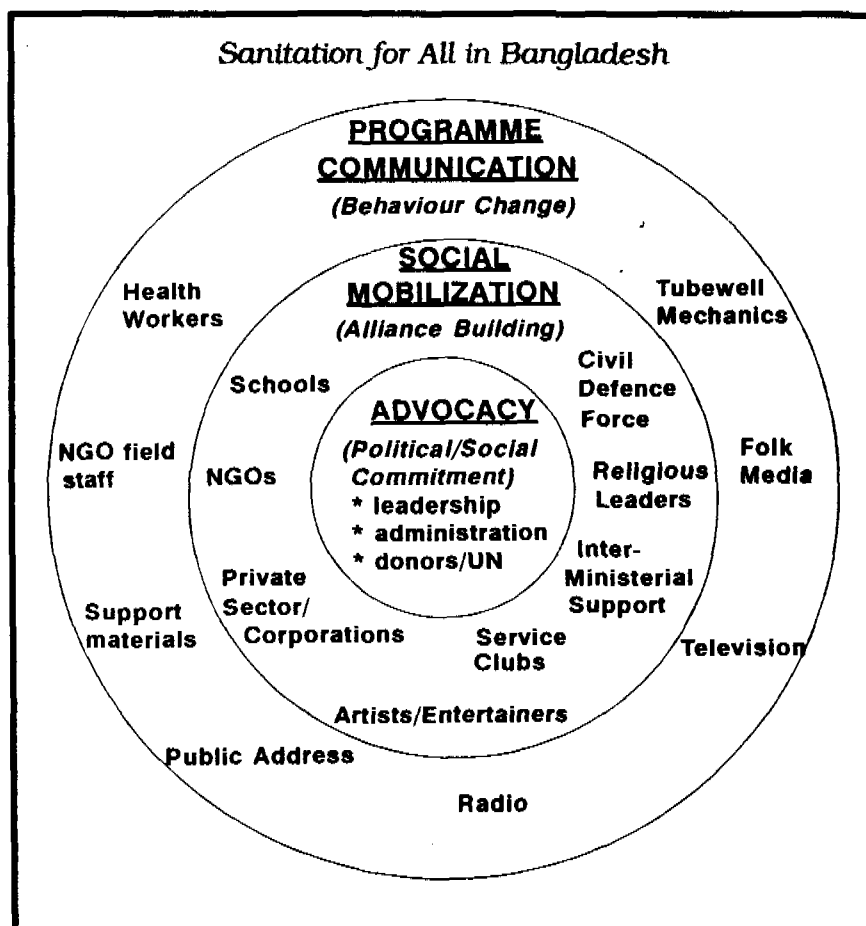


Figure 2 McKee 1993

*Advocacy* consists of the organization of information into arguments to be communicated through various interpersonal and media channels with a view to gaining

political and societal leadership acceptance and preparing a society for a particular development programme.

### *Social mobilization*

is the process of bringing together all feasible and practical inter-sectoral social allies to raise people's awareness of and demand for a particular development programme, to assist in the delivery of resources and services and to strengthen community participation and self reliance.

### *Programme communication*

is the process of identifying, segmenting and targeting specific groups/audiences with particular strategies, messages or training programmes through various mass media and interpersonal channels, traditional and non-traditional.

Advocacy, social mobilization and programme communication activities do not necessarily happen in a consecutive order. In general, advocacy begins the process and leads to social mobilization and programme communication. They work in a "planning continuum".

The sanitation promotion campaign in Henan province has been successful in advocacy of the leadership at all levels in 29% of the villages. Mobilization of partners and interpersonal communication with villagers (which focused mainly on latrine construction) worked in the first few years only. Effective programme communication activities were the weakest element in the Henan campaign.

From the mission, the following guidance emerges on the communication strategy for sanitation in China, communication tools required and timing involved.

## **2. 1 Analysis**

To prepare an effective communication strategy, research need to be carried out on knowledge, attitudes and practices, as well as on reach of the various media and interpersonal communication. UNICEF and NPHCC have to consolidate existing media and audience research, and commission new research where needed. They should also analyze which agencies and people can contribute to the sanitation communication programme.

To popularize the double jar funnel-type latrines in Henan province, PHCC has used a mix of media. Newspapers, periodicals, wire radio, television and videos were mentioned in various reports.

Those reports also identified key messages for cadres as well as villagers, explaining why latrine improvement is important.

For the *cadres* these messages include:

- a. it increases agricultural production,
- b. it contributes to national quality,
- c. it helps China's "reform and opening" policy,
- d. it enhances China's international reputation,
- e. it contributes to Health for All by 2000,



- f. it improves health knowledge, changes prevailing habits and customs.

The key messages on improved latrines for the *masses* include:

- it is good for health, beautifies the environment in rural areas, and decreases diseases;
- it increases production through better fertilizer, improves the soil, and realizes high and stable yields in agriculture;
- the input needed is small, the benefits are high.

The reasons why high government and party leaders in Henan have paid attention to sanitation are a mix of perceived economic, political and public health benefits.

Vice Governor of Henan Province, Zhang Honghua, during the 10th meeting of the NPHCC in February 1994, explained why the *provincial Party Committee and provincial government leaders* pay great attention to improvement of latrines:

- it vigorously develops agriculture,
- it improves health conditions in rural areas,
- it is 'doing good deeds' for the masses, and
- it builds closer relations between the party and the masses (Zhang Honghua, 1994).

The negative effects of dirty latrines and toilets on China's international reputation also play a role. Minister Chen Minzhang in his opening speech to the 1993 Nationwide Rural Area Improved Latrine Experience Exchange meeting in Puyang city warned that tourists complain to him and in letters to the leaders of the state, that the good impression of the beautiful China is lost because of the dirty toilets. And although in 1992-1993 the toilets in cities have improved considerably, it was still a big problem for China's bid to host the Olympic Games.

The 1994 edition of the popular travel guide "China - A travel survival kit"(Lonely Planet p 132-133), illustrates the reputation of Chinese latrines and toilets. Its 'toilets' section starts with: " Some travellers have give up eating (for a while at least) just to avoid having to use Chinese toilets". It goes on to say that "some public toilets look like they haven't been cleaned since the Han Dynasty".

The people involved in the further development of the communication strategy and work plans for sanitation in China should develop and put in practice their own model of Advocacy, Social Mobilization and Programme Communication. In Henan province for instance, the new latrine promotion campaign to the year 2000 will require new advocacy activities, followed by new social mobilization work and programme communication activities. In other provinces in China the national PHCC and UNICEF have to start with advocacy work, before they can get effective partners mobilized and programme communication activities developed.

In the sanitation promotion programme in Henan province it is recommended to use radio and television more effectively. This will spread awareness about the benefits and cost effectiveness of improved latrines to the farmers still having a traditional latrine. Key sanitation messages in the mass media will also add to the credibility of the people who are trying to persuade the communities to change their sanitation practices.

## **2. 2 Planning and programming**

Both in Henan province and at the national level, planned health and sanitation programmes have been announced until the year 2000. In Henan province the Vice Governor announced that a new latrine improvement programme is going to start shortly, in which a communication plan will be included. NPHCC, together with the Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture, and Ministry of Communication, has just started with a national health education campaign, in which environmental sanitation is one of the subjects. The Government/UNICEF programmes for 1995 and 1996-2000 also contain proposed actions on advocacy, social mobilization and communication dealing with environmental sanitation and hygiene.

NPHCC and UNICEF must make sure that a long term and systematic communication strategy for improved sanitation is part and parcel of these programmes. In the development of a communication strategy for sanitation they should also ensure maximum sharing of information, coordination and making use of related communication efforts. These include: advocacy for the National Plan of Action, Facts for Life follow-up, and the integrated basic services programme.

For the next phase in Henan and in new sanitation promotion programmes, it needs to be defined, in clear and simple terms, what and whose behaviour is being promoted. Messages need to address the needs and concerns of the intended audience. In Henan province (and elsewhere) the programme should focus on behaviour and target a few specific and simple behaviours. The most effective ones are: putting a tight cover in the pan, regular cleaning of the pan with a little water and brush, and washing hands after defecation and before touching foods. As these and family hygiene are tasks of the women in China, they should be a major target group for the existing as well as new sanitation improvement programmes.

The UNICEF WES counterparts from Anhui, Gansu, Henan and Shaanxi provinces are targeting policy and decision makers and their commitment for sanitation improvement and the press as the priority audience for the scheduled advocacy meetings in 1995. The first one is being planned in April. They also expressed interest in any advice and suggestions for communication tools and key messages that they could use to attract commitment from high level provincial officials. It was decided that a briefing pack for high level policy and decision makers is the first one, for which the consultant will mail suggestions.

While the themes remain essentially the same, the fine-tuning of message content, the choice of the media mix and design and packaging of messages will have to vary per target group: men, women children at household level, field workers, engineers, planners and politicians.

According to the government counterparts from the four provinces, the double jar funnel-shaped latrine as developed in Henan would be an option in their provinces and other central provinces of China as well. However, other proven sanitation technologies need to be incorporated in the communication programming as well.

## **2. 3 Message development, pretesting and revision**

In the field the mission found a number of communication tools produced by different counties in Henan province. An overview is provided in appendix 3. None of these had been pretested with intended audiences. The printed materials were mainly text based, without good and clear illustrations. Content wise the materials concentrate heavily on the construction technology of the double urn latrine and not enough on its hygienic use, maintenance and handwashing by latrine users. Print runs varied from 600 copies of 1 A4-page leaflet (distributed to village leaders) to 300,000 copies of a 6 - page question and answer brochure distributed to households.

When checking on the existence and use of communication materials in Henan province the mission has found that only in some counties occasional use has been made of county TV broadcasts, and radio wire broadcasts. The mission found four video productions and looked at three videos, which had had only very limited TV screening. Two from Puyang, one from Yucheng (PHC in the year 2000 on improved latrine benefits and impact), and one 40 minute one from Linzhou (see appendix 4). The Yucheng one was the best one, and had been shot in U-Matic, 200 copies of it have been sold at 100 yuan to visitors.

Before reprinting and before making new communication materials the existing ones should be thoroughly evaluated as to comprehension, attractiveness and recall of key messages with the target audiences. With the producers of these materials an exercise could be done trying to fill out the rest of the communication planning model as presented in Appendix 3.

The NPHCC in Beijing gave details to the mission about the new communication materials to be produced as part of the national health education campaign which has just started. In total 4,000 video tapes on 12 subjects on mother and child health, water and sanitation and immunization. Programmes of 8 - 10 minutes duration will be produced and distributed to TV transfer stations in ten counties. One of the 12 is on water, another is on environmental sanitation.

For the new sanitation video the NPHCC will be making a script and the Health Education Institute will do the shooting and production. The consultant left behind a rough idea for a script outline, which NPHCC would be pleased to review with the NHEI (see appendix 5).

Any sanitation communication materials development should at least be coordinated with the UNICEF Information and Communication Officer, and should be pretested.

UNICEF is assisting WES project counterparts in four provinces with local development of communication materials around sanitation improvement, in which the benefits and effective use of improved latrines are stressed. The mission gave advice to the WES Project Coordinator in Henan province on the draft brochure on the double urn latrine that he and a local artist have been developing in the context of the communication material work that is taking place with the four provincial WES project counterparts.

A copy of the 3-compartment septic tank toilet brochure, produced by the WES project people from Anhui province was also obtained and briefly discussed. These materials are

to be printed shortly and it would be advisable to print and share additional copies for use in other provinces.

Other communication tools that warrant further research and development are

- a short radio spot,
- a serial radio play,
- a tape slide programme.

Suggestions for those are provided in appendix 6.

It is important that as soon as possible the government communication specialist from the NPHCC/NHEI be drawn in to further develop the communication tools.

#### **2. 4. Implementation, monitoring and assessment**

These three processes overlap so that feedback can quickly be translated into improvements. Implementation includes the production of final messages and materials based on pretest results, the scheduling and integration of distribution through appropriate channels, and training of those who will use the materials. Wide circulation of implementation schedules and reports helps to harness alliance building.

Monitoring actions should focus on the volume of materials produced, the distribution through various media, the work plan and the quality of the relationships with other agencies. Assessment steps include measuring and tracking audience awareness, comprehension, recall and practice using affordable research techniques to obtain rapid feedback.

#### **2. 5. Evaluation**

This stage entails both the analysis of overall impact of the communication programme and applying the results for planning future programmes. Activities which the PHCC in Henan province and future communication programmes should undertake include analysis of the impact on the proposed audiences, and effectiveness of the media used.

**Appendix 1. RAP Survey report about FFL Communication Activity in Queshan County, Henan Province. 1992**

The result of the baseline survey in Henan province in 1992 showed that, in the Health Education project county as part of the UNICEF supported-health education programme in 12 provinces, knowledge about mother care, breast feeding and diarrhoea is lacking.

Observation results included:

- in all the investigated villages the wall paper on breast feeding had been put up in a public place;
- all the interviewed people had got the FFL booklet;
- among the interviewed people 61.5% got FFL information by watching TV, 35.5% by listening to a radio broadcast.

In the focus group discussions it was found that the women's health knowledge mainly comes from books, doctors, TV and elderly persons.

## **Appendix 2. Report on the survey of the requirements of FFL Communication and Health Education Resources in Queshan County 1993**

Health education courses are given in all grades above the third in primary schools. The teaching materials are uniformly printed and distributed by the County Bureau of Public Health, 4 class hours per semester. The lessons are taught jointly by the relevant personnel of the township hospitals and the school teachers.

According to the KAP survey 62.2% of the mothers interviewed do not know that the main danger of diarrhoea is dehydration, 94% cannot correctly feed infants suffering from diarrhoea. Only 36% of the mothers regularly wash their children's hands before meals and after going to the toilet.

Sources of health knowledge:

- main source books and newspapers 29.3%, TV 21.2%, health personnel 11.8%, family members 14.7%
- the most favourable sources are TV 34.3 %, books and newspapers 32.%, others 20.6%
- 36.3% watch TV several times a week, 31.1% everyday, 63.0% never listen to the radio
- 92.0% have not listened to the radio programme on polio during the recent three months
- only 0.5 % were aware of the Expanded Programme for Immunization Day.

The people who have influence over the mother and child care subjects are, in decreasing order: doctors, teachers, peers and family members.

The first objective for the communication strategy based on the KAP and RAP studies was to increase, by the end of 1993, the percentage of mothers of children under five who know that dehydration is the main danger of diarrhoea from 53.3% to 60%. A second objective to increase the percentage of those who know how to mix and use oral rehydration solution (ORS) from 34.9% to 40%.

Mothers of children under 5 are the primary target population for communication on these objective. Secondary target groups are village MCH personnel, village doctors, primary school teachers, village women's affairs cadres, family planing cadres.

Contents of the communication: dehydration is the main danger of diarrhoea, ORS can treat and prevent diarrhoea, how to mix ORS. The media mix includes mass media ( TV, radio, videos, propaganda posters, leaflets and pamphlets) as well as interpersonal communication (home visits, in doctors waiting rooms and consultations, during the Health propaganda days and the two activity days for the whole county's large scale communication of FFL).

One to two mothers per village will be taught to become communicators and trainers in ORS use. For Facts for Life 3 course on training on communication techniques were given at county level for 120 trainees. At township level, 18 courses on this subject reached 720 trainees. During slack seasons in farming, the trained village doctors and women's affairs cadres provide training to the women.

Communication materials produced included 100,000 posters on how to mix ORS (at 100,000 Yuan, videotape on breast feeding (15,000 Yuan), and 5 audio tapes (7,500 Yuan).

The budget for training (84,000 Yuan), equipment 2 video sets (32,000, travelling (6,000 Yuan) and hygiene education consultancies 40,000 Yuan, KAP survey (25,000 Yuan) added up to 318,500 Yuan.

Communication materials used in Henan province

Nanle

1	2	3	4	5 Communication Response		
<i>Desired Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Existing Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Obstacles/Resistance/ Barriers</i>	<i>Priority Problems</i>	<i>Who to address?</i>	<i>With what message?</i>	<i>Through what channel(s)</i>
awareness about IL				township staff, village leaders	importance IL + construction	meetings
awareness about IL				households	80 narrations key points	wire broadcasts
awareness about IL				households	key points construction	70,000 printed materials
importance of IL				households	3000 IL slogans	put on walls and banners

Yucheng

1	2	3	4	5 Communication Response		
<i>Desired Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Existing Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Obstacles/Resistance/ Barriers</i>	<i>Priority Problems</i>	<i>Who to address?</i>	<i>With what message?</i>	<i>Through what channel(s)</i>
awareness about IL benefits and impact				meetings leaders	importance IL + construction	video, 300 copies sold



Puyang

1	2	3	4	5 Communication Response		
<i>Desired Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Existing Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Obstacles/Resistance/ Barriers</i>	<i>Priority Problems</i>	<i>Who to address?</i>	<i>With what message?</i>	<i>Through what channel(s)</i>
awareness about IL construction and benefits				meetings leaders	importance IL + construction	video
awareness about IL				meetings leaders	importance of IL + impact	video

Linzhou:

1	2	3	4	5 Communication Response		
<i>Desired Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Existing Knowledge Attitude Practice</i>	<i>Obstacles/Resistance/ Barriers</i>	<i>Priority Problems</i>	<i>Who to address?</i>	<i>With what message?</i>	<i>Through what channel(s)</i>
awareness about IL				households 300,000 printed	31 questions and answers	6 pages brochure
awareness about IL				primary schools 160,000 printed	30 questions and answers	6 pages brochure
ability to properly construct IL				600 village leaders	technical drawing and construction explanation	1 A3 page

#### **Appendix 4. Videos Latrine promotion Henan**

1. Henan Province: Promotion of Latrine Construction
2. Puyang city - Henan Province: Promotion of Latrine Construction

#### **Check**

- main objective
- primary target group
- pre tested
- how many copies produced
- how often shown
- where shown
- users' guide for follow-up available
- evaluated

#### **Overall impression:**

- too many messages
- too many fast movements
- not enough pause in narration
- too many officials meetings
- trying to combine promotional section with technical description
- not sufficient persons we can relate to (villagers, promoters, jar/pan factory people
- no emotion

3, PHC 2000 Yucheng, all about benefits, technology, construction, health impact research of the double urn latrine, includes some nice animation sequences. Is the best of the videos seen (approximately 20 minutes), the waitress in the restaurant watched it and did not understand much of it. However she was interested to may be build such a good latrine in her house hold.

## **Appendix 5. Suggested outline for Video 8- 10 minutes**

**Goal:** raise awareness about the benefits of improved sanitation of the farmers, as well as of the policy makers and decision makers.

by taking a real life farmer (the one in Chihuazhuang village, Yucheng ? who said he got 20 fen more per pound apples sold on the market (because of the better manure). Follow him in taking out manure from the second pit to his field, selling the apples, interview him.

Briefly show how the double urn works (animation footage available in Yucheng, how it is kept clean, how the sludge is taken out from the first urn and hygienically disposed off.

Follow his wife and children making use of the latrine, and let them tell the benefits, no smell, no flies, good for health, compared to the old traditional latrine.

Trace how the improved latrine was introduced in this household and the village. Interview a mason who was involved in constructing the latrines, and who has earned money out of that, not only in his own village, but also being hired occasionally for latrine construction elsewhere

Talk to the women cluster leader, if she was involved in mobilization of the community.

Interview the village leader, did they get an award for achieving the latrine improvement goal? What did they do with the money. The people in this area told us that they realize that they have become better off in the village because of the improved latrine.

Show old footage (or new if possible) of a Minister or, a Governor listening to a farmer. Show how Provincial level officials from Governor to township level PHCC/PHB have in the past assisted latrine improvement in Henan.

Show briefly other types of latrines.

Let the Minister Chen Minzhang or Vice Governor Li Zhi Bin (Henan) explain the new campaign for improved latrine until the year 2000. + summarize benefits: not only good for 15-25% higher crop yields and economics, but also good for health, good for the image of the province, good for the image of China internationally,

## **Appendix 6. Other communication tools suggestions**

These suggestions may be discussed with the provincial level people involved in communication materials development.

### **1. Radio spot**

Use tools of commercial advertising. For example, organize frequent spots on the radio with simple messages such as:

"Get an improved, double urn latrine - it's good for your family".

"Build a latrine - its manure is better for your crops  
and - it's good for your health".

"An improved latrine is modern and reduces also bad smells and flies".

If you want to know more about improving your latrine contact .....

### **2. Tape slide programme**

Develop a series of tape-slide programmes targeting different audiences:

primary school children, school teacher and managers, local government leaders.

### **3. Serial radio play**

Develop a serial radio play on problems with bad sanitation and bad hygienic practices and present the solutions and benefits available from the improved latrines.

### **4. Briefing pack.**

Develop a briefing pack for policy and decision makers along the lines of the key messages about the benefits of IL (see video suggestion) + supporting materials. The consultant promised to mail an outline for this in a few weeks time.

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