
12 A BRIEF CASE EXAMPLE OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (PLANNING AND PRODUCTION) IN GUYANA'S LARGEST SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PROJECT

O Hunter

In Guyana's largest science and engineering project - The Upper Mazaruni Hydroelectric Project - written communication is an integral and essentially vital part of the overall single continuum of purposive multi-media communication intervention Strategy of the Project's D.S.C. Unit.

Within this context, the D.S.C. Unit is found dealing with written communication relating to specific problems, issues and publics as part of an overall strategy.

At one end of this strategy is the mediated communication intervention material of which the written communication is a part and is aimed mainly at affecting awareness. In the centre of this continuum are various kinds of small media, of which the Slide Sound Programme is a part, acting as a leaven. At the other end of the spectrum we have the interpersonal non-mediated aspect of the communication intervention strategy which is aimed at reinforcing the various segments of the communication effort.

All three of these intervention actions interact and results in interesting changes in the human communication cosmos. Most of the multi-media messages, actions, strategies are geared to reach specific publics for specific purposes. Some of them are geared to reach general audiences.

In this brief case example we will only look at two bits of written communication material produced by the DSC Unit;
a) Hydro Focus b) Hydro Progress.

Hydro Progress

This publication is monthly and is aimed at reaching National decision makers, Senior Hydro officials. Senior Officers of the Hydro Project supporting agencies and scientific technical and engineering operatives generally who have an interest in the Project. It is aimed at creating awareness and understanding on the part of these very important people without whom we cannot build the Hydroelectric Project. The language is relatively simple with the style flowing just like the waters of the Mazaruni. Some 1,500 copies are printed.

Hydro Focus a Tabloid Newspaper

This publication is fortnightly with size varying from 4 - 16 pages depending on the specific purposes. What is significant about Hydro Focus is the fact that it is a people's paper

produced by the people.

Just imagine our DSC staff darting in and out villages of the Mazaruni, Kako, Kukui, Kamarang and Kurupung rivers, along escarpments of the Pakaraimas, up and down the mountains and valleys of the Roraima formation among people of varying cultures and within an interesting socio-psychological and environmental mosaic which sometimes really make nonsense of scientific communication methodology.

Of course all of this interaction between the DSC and the various socio-psychological, cultural and environmental entities is simply to get the feel of the people, the opinion leaders, to establish a rapport, a oneness - some compatibility - all of which are elements which make up the mortar we communications' masons use to close the communication gap and effect understanding - changes - involvement.

In a nutshell what we are trying to do in DSC is to involve the people directly and indirectly in the planning, pre-testing, production and field evaluation of this written communication material taking all of the communication parameters and variables - inter-personal, extra-personal and environmental - into consideration.

With editorial representatives chosen from among the workers, residents of the Region, Akawaio, Arecuna, Islander, Coastlander — the people for whom the material is mainly produced — we are sure that our communication goals are being largely achieved.

We strive to keep this publication simple, entertaining, educational, interesting, but more importantly we keep it honest and ensure that the people see themselves as being the ones that are important.

We try to achieve presentation, comprehension and legibility. We ensure that each Issue achieves something. We go to the scientists, engineers and administrators and discuss technical matters with them all the time placing ourselves in the position of our specific publics, empathizing with them and the scientists and then interpreting the relevant information accordingly.

Sometimes there are difficulties in this area especially since we are using one written communication material in a major cross-cultural setting. How do we put over the scientific assurance that the 140-ft. high Sand Landing Hydroelectric Dam will not be broken by the pressure and force of the Chidago Reservoir water.

The fact is that the indigenous Amerindians in addition to the Porkknockers and others have been living their lives in the Upper Mazaruni — they are true children of that environment. They know the power of water during "wash de bush".

They have seen whole plasseys, small settlements, landings, rest benabs washed away by angry waters foaming, rushing from the top of the mountains. They have seen the huge valleys, large villages, 'savans' turn into large lakes and flood plains; waterways turned into rivers within hours. Can a single dam hold back this kind of water?

How do we explain an important scientific fact that the electrical power passing through the high voltage transmission lines placed in the jungle, is to such magnitude and power that it is possible for an individual to receive an electric shock from those lines without even coming into contact with them.

And finally, how do we cater for the lowest common denominator of intelligence when we are using one written communication to reach many publics, some of which are specialised while others are either illiterate/semi-illiterate or have language problems. The answer of course was mentioned earlier and that is we will need to reinforce the written communication with other multi-media actions.

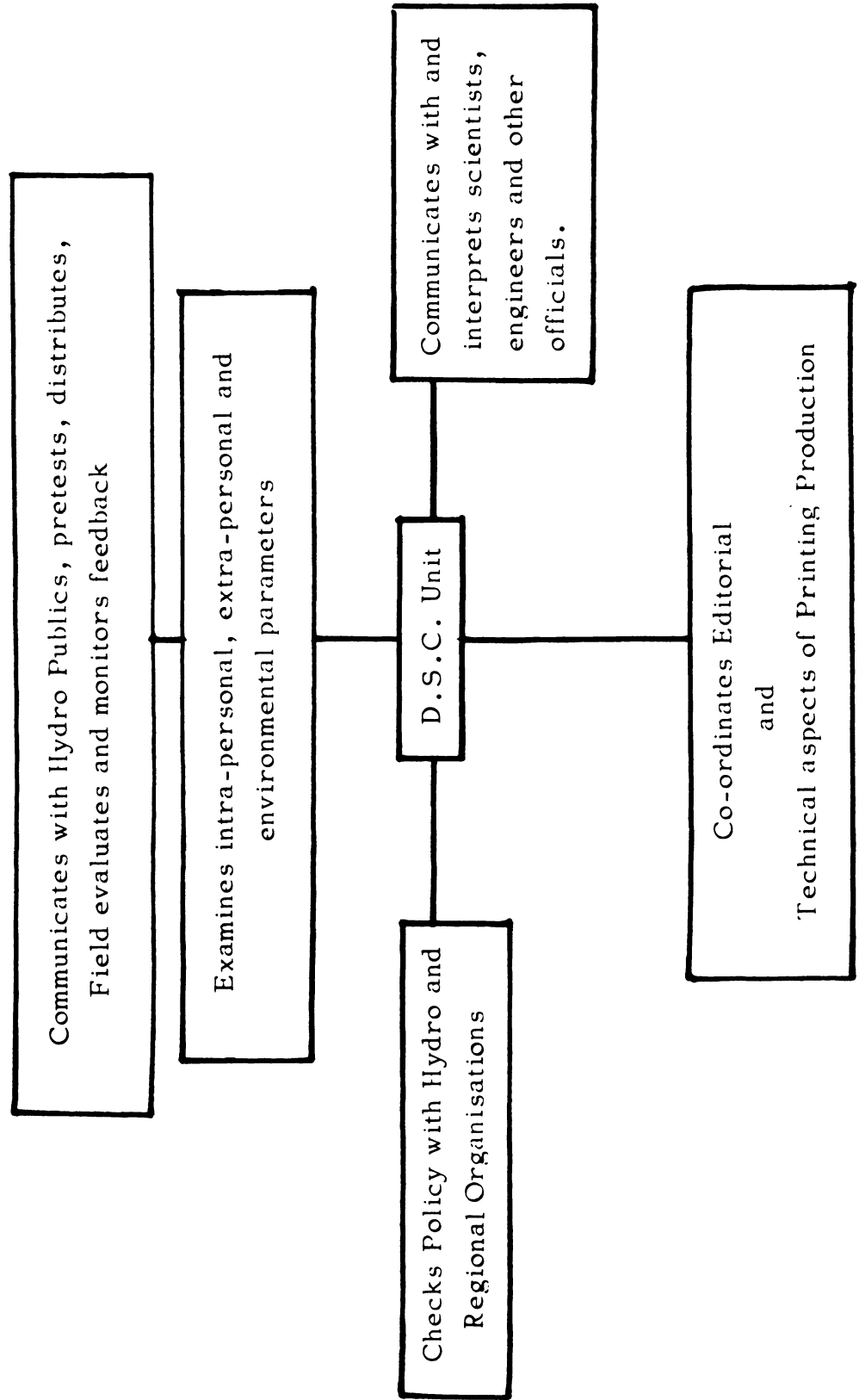
On the production side the DSC Staff, which is a micro-cosm of the Project area as a rule, comes together to do the rough layout and final dummy for the newspaper. Articles and photographs finally produced in keeping with space all allocated in the layout.

Photographs must qualify in terms of context, composition, quality etc. The staff has to ensure that type size and style, artwork including line illustrations are relevant to the particular issue.

In the final analysis the material is taken to the Printers where it is type-set, proof-read and laid out. It is then taken through the various stages of photo lithography and web offset printing production. (At the end of my lecture I will demonstrate with various types of material which I have brought e.g. computer tapes and codes, films, paste-ups, layouts, flats, type sizes and styles, printing plates etc., the various stages of planning and production).

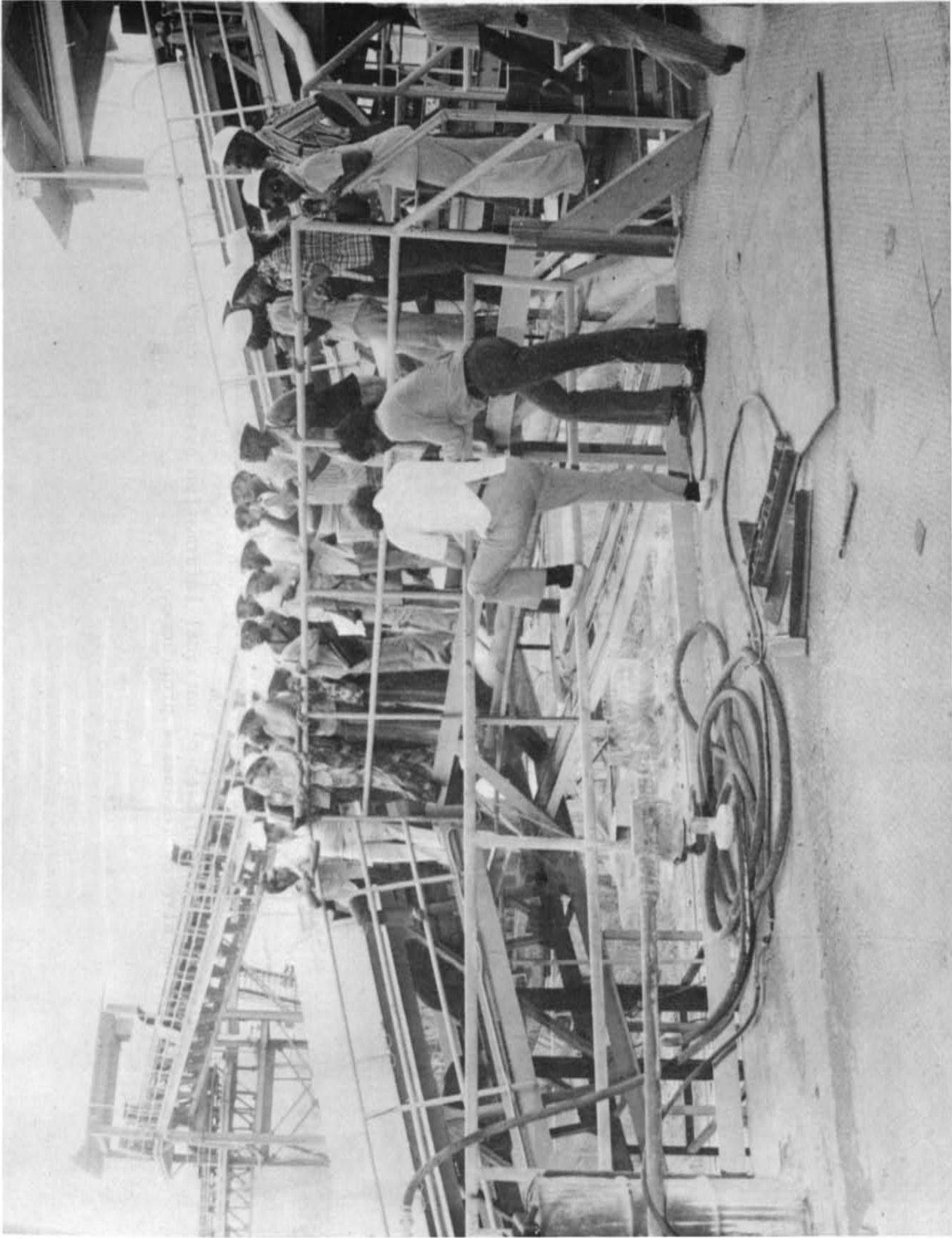
Throughout the exercise we try to avoid criminal acts against communication theory and the principle of planning, pretesting, producing, distributing, field evaluation and feedback in order to ensure that the particular written communication material creates awareness, understanding, effect change and greater involvement of the people for the benefit of the people.

D.S.C. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION (PLANNING AND PRODUCTION) MODEL





Informal discussion on the uses of national information systems continued even during the recess of an already intensive programme.



Workshop participants tour the Bauxite Plant of Guyana, Bauxite Mining Enterprise Limited at Linden, 65 miles up the Demerara River, during one day sessions held out of Georgetown.