

THE APPLICATION OF HEALTH EDUCATION METHODS IN RURAL AREAS IN LATIN AMERICA*

REPORT OF COMMITTEE I (Technical Matters)

Committee I examined and approved, with some modifications, the report of Working Party C relative to the application of health education methods in rural areas in Latin America.

The conclusions reached by Working Party C on the above topic are as follows:

CONSIDERING:

1. That the successful solution of health problems is intimately related to changes in the customs and habits of the individuals or groups affected by those problems;
2. That members of the community must be encouraged to take an active part and assume responsibility in all matters concerning their health;
3. That permanent liaison is essential among individuals, the community, and agencies, to find the best solution to problems related to health;
4. That all personnel in the public health services should understand and make use of the concepts and principles of health education in their daily work;
5. That professional health educators, as well as other workers are essential in the development of educational public health programs and in the training of personnel in the use of educational techniques;
6. That at present the number of professional health educators is inadequate to meet the minimum requirements of national health programs, and it is difficult to obtain such personnel for permanent activities in rural areas;
7. That the application of health education methods and techniques in rural areas is relatively new in most of the American Republics: and

BEARING IN MIND:

1. That health education is a fundamental and essential part of all public health programs or services:
2. That health education is effective only when planned and developed as an integral part of every public health program; and
3. That the objectives of health education are:
 - (a) To awaken the interest of individuals and communities to the

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- understanding and use of the means that will help them maintain their health;
- (b) To seek the means of encouraging individuals, families, and groups to study and understand their health problems, so they may take an active, responsible, and permanent part in the solution of those problems; and
 - (c) To seek permanent, over-all, and unified liaison between the community and the individuals, and official and private agencies that are working to improve all phases of the environment,

IT IS RECOMMENDED:

1. That Member Countries give preferential attention to the study of ways and means of overcoming the shortage of professional health educators, in accordance with the standards that may be set by the World Health Organization;
2. That as a temporary solution to the problem of providing full-time health education services in the rural areas, where there is an insufficient number of professionally qualified health educators available, it will be necessary to train qualified and carefully selected personnel to serve as assistants to the professional health educators, in such educational activities (the number of such personnel should not be so large as to preclude effective supervision by the professional health educators);
3. That one of the primary concerns of the professional health educators should be to help improve the educational activities carried out by other public health workers;
4. That the educational methods applied in rural communities be adapted to the cultural level, state of health, and socio-economic conditions in each region of the country;
5. That all educational work be preceded by a study of the environment in which the program is to be carried out;
6. That in all plans the interests and most urgent needs of the individuals and local groups be taken into account;
7. That the solution of the problems be worked out, preferably in successive stages and with the active participation of those concerned;
8. That the undertaking of any plans also take into consideration the coordination of all resources made available by private and state agencies;
9. That the Pan American Sanitary Bureau further increase its efforts, together with national and international agencies, both public and private, in order:
 - (a) To promote the principles, concepts, and objectives of health education as set forth in this document;

- (b) To assist in the development of means for training both professional health educators and auxiliary personnel;
- (c) To encourage the incorporation of health education in the training of all public health workers; and
- (d) To seek means for the exchange of information, materials, experiences, and research in health education, among the countries of the Hemisphere.

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THE XIV PAN AMERICAN SANITARY CONFERENCE,

Considering the importance that should be given to health education in all phases of public health and activities related thereto; and

Taking into account the discussions held by the Working Party appointed to study this topic, and the report and recommendations proposed by that Working Party,

RESOLVES:

1. To approve the text of the preamble and the recommendations submitted by Committee I on the topic "Application of Health Education Methods in Rural Areas in Latin America" (Document CSP14/79, Rev. 1).
2. To instruct the Director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau to encourage, insofar as possible, the promotion and implementation of the recommendations contained in the aforementioned document, and to inform the Directing Council, in his annual reports, of the steps taken with respect to this matter.
3. To recommend that the Director of the Bureau give wide distribution to the complete text of Document CSP14/79, Rev. 1, for the information of all the countries.

* CSP14, Res. XXVI, Final Act, *Pan Amer. San. Org.*