Management excellence

The UNICEF secretariat, in response to a 1997 Executive Board request [YUN 1997, p. 1222], presented an assessment of the management excellence programme (MEP) from its inception in mid-1995 to early 1998 [E/ICEF/1998/AB/L.51]. It reviewed the programme's interventions in country, regional and headquarters offices, emphasizing their impact on UNICEF programmes. The report noted that MEP had led to significant improvements in the structure, systems, processes and culture of UNICEF. Those changes had enhanced UNICEF's capacity to manage its resources, to carry out its programme work and to be accountable for results.

The Executive Board, on 5 June [dec. 1998/11], encouraged the Executive Director to continue strengthening the implementation of management excellence throughout UNICEF and at all levels. It endorsed her recommendation that management excellence be considered "mainstreamed" and that subsequent reporting on performance be included under the relevant agenda items, with attention given to identifying aspects of accountability, particularly elements of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, in the delivery of agreed programme objectives.

Communication and information

As requested by the Executive Board in 1997 [YUN 1997, p. 1223], the UNICEF secretariat, in March [E/ICEF/1998/10], prepared a more elaborate communication policy, including a definition of the role of the communication function at global, regional and country levels, the identification of priority areas and a strategy for implementation. The report examined the role of communication in the context of the UNICEF mandate and mission, proposed strategies and discussed the communication functions, activities and structures within UNICEF that supported the policy. Among the communication channels and processes available to UNICEF were electronic media, print, interpersonal communication and communication through participatory learning. UNICEF carried out audience research, monitoring and evaluation activities, but the development of valid and useful indicators remained a challenge as the scope of UNICEF programmes became wider at the country, regional and global levels. With regard to accountability, an approach that was both comprehensive and specifically targeted was required, with all efforts coordinated so that the UNICEF message was clear and compelling, with responsibility placed at the level closest to the target audiences. An annex to the report provided an overview of UNICEF publications.

The Executive Board, on 2 June [dec. 1998/9], endorsed the report on the communication strategy as a broad policy framework for UNICEF activities in that area, including continuing efforts to improve research and evaluation capacities and the communication functions for country, regional and headquarters levels. The Board supported the approach outlined in the policy, which defined UNICEF communication functions as including information, advocacy, behavioural development and change, and social and resource mobilization. The Executive Director was encouraged to intensify UNICEF efforts to strengthen collaboration and partnerships with relevant sectors of the communication field.

Annual reports

In January [dec. 1998/1], the Executive Board took note of the Executive Director's annual report to the Economic and Social Council [E/ICEF/1998/4 (Part I)] and asked the Executive Director to include and identify in future reports issues that would require particular consideration by the Board and the Council. The Board supported the approach outlined in the policy, which defined UNICEF communication functions as including information, advocacy, behavioural development and change, and social and resource mobilization. The Executive Director was encouraged to intensify UNICEF efforts to strengthen collaboration and partnerships with relevant sectors of the communication field.


Youth

Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth

United Nations efforts to promote policies and programmes involving youth continued to focus on implementation of the 1995 World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 50/81 [YUN 1995, p. 1211]. The Programme of Action addressed problems faced by youth worldwide and outlined meaningful ways to enhance youth participation in national and international policy- and decision-making. In particular, it outlined action guidelines in 10 priority areas: education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency, leisure-time activities, girls and young women, and the full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and decision-making. By June 1998, 144 countries had formulated a national youth policy; however, only 73 of those countries had implemented a national programme of action.