"THE NEW MAT IS WOVEN OVER THE OLD": GHANAIAN INDIGENOUS
COMMUNICATION FORMS AND THEIR POTENTIAL AS FACILITATORS IN HEALTH
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by

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This thesis examines indigenous communication resources and their potential for incorporation into government and donor agency programs that promote primary health care (immunization, nutrition education, family planning) in developing countries. Such an examination follows in the tradition of researchers who have identified popular communication forms, particularly drama, as credible, accessible, and intelligible to local audiences. The case study included examines a variety of these forms in one area of Ghana. The thesis proposes that a partnership between those skilled in these forms and health care workers would allow these audiences to participate in the development and dissemination of messages meaningful to them, and that it could encourage a greater interest in and adoption of health care practices than is currently the case. However, such participation is not currently encouraged by health care planners and workers, and a considerable restructuring of the communication environment would be necessary to implement it.

Field work was conducted over a six-month period in and around Winneba, a fishing community on the coast of Ghana, West Africa. The primary methodology used was participant observation, including interviews, conversations, visits, and participation in local activities.

The study found that many of the customs and traditions of
the local people remain intact, despite ongoing exposure to print and electronic media. Performance groups are still an integral part of the social structure, and annual festivals draw large numbers of people. Drummers, singers, dancers, musicians, and masqueraders are popular. Proverbs are widely used and widely understood.

The thesis concludes that many of the communication resources available in Winneba offer potential for adaptation and incorporation into health care communication programs. It also draws attention to the recently-established Centres for National Culture in Ghana, whose mandate includes the identification and promotion of indigenous cultural communication forms, and their use in relation to local development issues. These centres have the potential to function as catalysts, bringing together local artists and performers and representatives of various ministries -- health, social welfare, community development -- so that interesting and appropriate messages might be developed. However, a greater appreciation of these performers as potential educators may have to be fostered among administrators and health care workers, who are often reluctant to give up their control over information and to share knowledge and skills with "unprofessional" groups.
Dedicated to the memory of Dr. Frank Okwu Ugboajah
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I. COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT -- EVOLVING PARADIGMS

Introduction

This thesis grew out of an interest in indigenous communication systems and the role of culture in communication, fostered initially through reading Continuity and Change in Communication Systems: An Asian Perspective, edited by Georgette Wang and Wimal Dissanayake. Published in 1984, the eleven case studies in the book reaffirm the importance that traditional cultural values still hold in Asian societies, despite rapid socio-economic change. As the editors point out in the introduction:

Rapid growth and expansion of communication technologies in recent years have led to the glorification of change and have discounted and underplayed the continuity of the past and present. The focal point of research is how modern media change or replace old ways of thinking, behaving, or communicating. However, some elements of the old system remain and continue to play a vital role in communication in many regions of the world today. The implications of this continuity to development is not fully explored (p. xx).

Although elements of the "old system" have been studied by anthropologists and ethnologists in a variety of cultural contexts, their relevance to the support of development activities has only recently been recognized by planners and change agents. Several West African communication scholars have sought reasons for this lack of attention. Opubor, in a critique of communication studies to 1975, wrote that indigenous communication systems were ignored because they were not amenable to the analytical approaches "in vogue," or because the skills required to investigate them were outside the competencies of
Western or Western-trained investigators:

... no effort to synthesize what is known about communication in rural Africa has emerged. ... The descriptive task and the experimental task that enable prediction about what strategies, in what contexts, for what kinds of sources and receivers, on what kinds of topics may inhibit or facilitate African communication efforts: these are yet to come (1975, p. 3).

Currently the regional advisor on communications for UNFPA in West Africa, Opubor is still advocating research on traditional forms of communication, their philosophical foundations, use and carrying capacity, in various socio-cultural settings (1993).

Awa (1979) has attributed the lack of attention to indigenous communication systems to Western bias at both the theoretical and methodological levels in diffusion research, and Obeng-Quaidoo (1985) has called for a shift from survey research to a more qualitative examination of core values and world view, as revealed in music and folklore, as a means of better understanding the "intuitive communicative behavior" of his people. In a reappraisal of development communication for the 1990s, McAnany and Story (1989) conclude that although case studies of the structure and function of indigenous communication systems are growing, little systematic work has been done.

The assumption of this thesis is that there is an array of indigenous communication forms and settings that have been little explored and are little understood by those specializing in development communication. Although such forms represent cultural continuity in a society, at the same time they may actively and
creatively respond to outside stimuli, incorporating and assimilating change. Just as policy makers are beginning to recognize that indigenous healers and healing systems will continue to exist and be patronized alongside Western biomedicine, so it must be recognized that indigenous communication systems will remain, despite the introduction of modern mass media. Just as the ritual surrounding various traditional therapies is seen as contributing to effective healing (if not always to the "cure"), so the ritual surrounding songs, dances, drumming, proverbs and stories contribute to effective communication. And just as the relationship of the traditional healer to the patient is quite different from that of a Western-trained doctor (as is the setting of their interaction), so is the relationship of traditional communicators to their audiences quite different from that of mass media. (In the Yoruba language of southern Nigeria, for example, the phrase for radio translates as "the machine which speaks but accepts no reply.")

However, little empirical evidence exists as to the kind and quality of this relationship within specific cultural contexts. What is needed is a better understanding of the forms and settings of traditional media, their popularity and credibility, and the style and content of performance. With such an understanding, efforts could then be directed towards ways to improve the participation of indigenous communicators in community development programs. This thesis is a contribution towards that
This thesis documents some of the efforts made, particularly in Africa, to use what has been called "community media" or "alternative media" in development activities. Such communication forms rely heavily on local resources and participation. For the most part the emphasis has been on popular theatre, using the theatre arts -- song, dance and drama -- to air community problems, encourage discussion, and propose solutions. The case study included here goes beyond the popular theatre form to examine a broader array of existing indigenous communication forms in one area of Ghana, and considers their potential as development support.

Such an examination will reveal the distance travelled by academics and planners since the early 70s when development was conceived as

... a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita income and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organization. Development is modernization at the social level (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, p. 4).

The central ideas of the old paradigm for development -- economic growth, capital-intensive technology and centralized planning -- have been replaced by a new emphasis on local initiative and decision-making and a sustained improvement in quality of life.

In much of the communication literature and in development planning, however, the emphasis on technology -- radio, television, video, satellites, fibre optics -- remains. Those who have perfected it are eager to export it; recipient governments are eager to adopt it. Yet in many countries, the introduction of
a technology such as television has been unrelated to development goals. Pressures from urban elites, business reasons or national vanity more often provided the motivation. Television was introduced into Iran by the Iranian distributor of Pepsi Cola, who also owned the franchise for RCA television sets. Uganda introduced color television to cover Idi Amin's wedding; Thailand to televise the Miss Thailand beauty contest, and Indonesia and India to cover the Asian Games (Stevenson, 1988).

The impact of such technologies on values, customs and relationships has received widespread attention from scholars in India (Thomas, 1990), the Caribbean (Dunn, 1989), Latin America (Oliviera, 1989) and Africa (Ugboajah, 1985; Obeng-Quaidoo, 1985). Often overlooked, however,

... is an examination of the information and communication networks being used prior to the introduction of new technologies. ... The failure to pay adequate attention to the base condition often results in a simple documentation of purported benefits of the new technology to those particular users who have benefitted. This approach... tends to draw the researcher into the role of myopic promoter of the technology (Melody, in Samarajiva, 1988).

The case study included in this thesis examines the "base condition" -- the forms and settings of communication in a Ghanaian town and its rural environs. The people skilled in oral communication forms are identified, the forms examined, and their potential to support local development activity is determined. A particular activity, health education, has been

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1The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) recently signed an agreement with Cable News Network (CNN) that allows GBC to transmit CNN programs in the Accra area on a 24-hour basis, and to retransmit them on the national network. The programs are scrambled and viewers must be equipped with a decoder to view them.
chosen, as primary health care is an area that has received the concentrated attention of governments and international agencies during the 80s, working towards "Health for All by the Year 2000." This global strategy, drawn up at a WHO-sponsored international health conference held at Alma-Ata (in what is now Kazakhstan) in 1978, aims to make essential health care universally acceptable to individuals and families through their full participation, and at a cost that they can afford.

According to the Declaration of Alma-Ata, primary health care (PHC) forms an integral part of the country’s health system. . . and of the overall social and economic development of the community. It is the first level of contact of individuals, the family and community with the national health system, bringing health care as close as possible to where people live and work, and constitutes the first element of a continuing health care process (WHO, 1978, p.6).

PHC is widely accepted by health professionals as the most realistic and cost-effective strategy to achieve Health for All. The report of an international workshop on primary health care technologies held in Sri Lanka in 1985 (sponsored by the Aga Khan Foundation, WHO and UNICEF) concluded that the broad application of more appropriate technologies at the family and community levels would greatly enhance PHC coverage, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as facilitate community involvement and self-reliance. The major challenge, it concluded, was "going to scale" with these technologies. In the context of PHC, technology is generally understood to mean the knowledge, skills, and hardware that are used to address a problem.

In the report’s conclusions, participants endorsed giving
the highest priority to four of the workshop's themes -- pregnancy and childbirth, immunization, participatory communication, and nutrition-related technologies. Of the four areas, participatory communication -- defined as a continuous process of interaction between health workers and the community -- was seen as deserving the most urgent attention.

One of the major research areas identified was the study of "existing community technologies for communication, especially folk media," based on the premise that participatory communication should be built on traditional communication structures, systems and beliefs, maximising the use of local human resources.

**Primary health care in Ghana -- running to keep up**

Successive Ghanaian governments have endorsed a PHC strategy, based on the premise that health activities are part of the total social and economic development of the country. However, they have generally failed to follow up on the implementation. A national review of Ghana's progress made by WHO in 1985 concluded that "very powerful endorsements of PHC are made by each government, yet the structures are not created to carry through those endorsements" (Good, 1988). The Rawlings government has also expressed its endorsement of a PHC policy, and emphasized its commitment to fundamental organizational and structural changes in the health care system, including a focus on rural populations, community mobilization and self-reliance, and co-operation with traditional healers.

In the Winneba district of Ghana, where the field work
discussed in this thesis was undertaken, PHC is provided by a district health team made up of four divisions -- maternal and child health and family planning, environmental health, nutrition education, and communicable disease control, including immunization. A current immunization campaign against six childhood "killer diseases" -- polio, measles, tuberculosis, diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus -- is part of a broader effort sponsored by UNICEF and WHO to promote sustainable child survival and development in developing countries. Health personnel are assisted in the exercise by committees made up of members of various "revolutionary organs," including a national women's movement, members of the local elected assemblies, the national teachers' association and the road transportation union.

Launching Child Survival and Development Week in December, 1989, the Secretary for Mobilization and Social Welfare pointed out that health authorities do not have the resources nor the outreach to carry health messages to vulnerable groups at the grassroots, especially women in rural areas. These committees are expected to formulate plans and strategies that will help create awareness and understanding among this particular audience.

UNICEF figures for 1991 show that out of every 1,000 live births in the country, 84 babies die before the age of one year and 90 children die before five years. The high mortality rate is due mainly to diseases preventable with vaccines, malaria, respiratory tract infections, diarrhoea, and poor environmental health (T-Vieta, 1989). In September, 1989, UNICEF commended Ghana for having achieved 61 per cent coverage in the expanded
program of immunization and pledged continuous support to enable the country to reach 80 per cent coverage by 1990. Although there has been considerable activity by health workers regarding immunization, and heavy media attention, the achievements that have been announced may in some cases be suspect. In the Eastern Region, it was discovered that although the 80 per cent target had been reached, only 42 per cent of the children had received the full course of shots. Yet vaccines like DPT, against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, have to be given three times at regular intervals for them to be effective (Mante, 1989).²

This lack of follow-up is a serious problem in several areas of health care. The officer in charge of communicable diseases in Winneba related it to the treatment for yaws and bilharzia. Both treatments must be given over a precise period of time, yet parents tend to bring their children to the clinic or health post on market day, when it is most convenient, and don’t return again.

Insufficient inputs and need for reinforcement were also identified as problems by the officer in charge of nutrition education. In most villages, members of the health team speak to small groups. Posters that are displayed are taken down when the team leaves, as these are in short supply and must be used again at the next stop. The timing of the visit may also be a problem. Most people are at their farms during the day, and farming is a priority. The evening was seen to be a more suitable time for

²Factors identified by Adekunle in Nigeria in 1978 still appear to be major impediments to completing immunization programs. See Endnote.
education and discussion, but no incentive is offered to the team members in the form of food or travel allowance to encourage them to spend the night.

The health team needs what James Grant, executive director of UNICEF, calls "partners in the alliance" for improved health care. Putting a core of basic information -- on immunization, on oral rehydration therapy, on family planning -- at the disposal of families who need it is an enormous task.

It is the great health challenge of our times. And to meet that challenge, it will be necessary to forge a new public health alliance, to stimulate a new and permanent mobilisation of a wide range of conventional and unconventional resources in the cause of health. (1988, p. 33)

This thesis is in part a response and reaction to the call for community input. Whose input is being sought? What is the basis for selection, and who makes the choices? In 1988, the Ghanaian government and UNICEF Ghana undertook a "social mobilization analysis" to identify individuals and existing organizations with the potential to serve as health communicators and to determine the type of assistance they needed to maximize their effectiveness. The analysis and its recommendations will be discussed further in chapter 5. In order to underline the significance of such a study, however, and the importance of communication and communicators in health education and in health services delivery, attention is drawn here to two cases, one from the South Pacific and the other from Nigeria. The first demonstrates how the professionalization and bureaucratization of health services -- the increasing separation of health care workers from the community -- resulted in changes in communication patterns and eventually in a decline of services.
The second shows how the incorporation of community members skilled in local communication forms resulted in an improved health education program.

The "etiquette of communication" -- Samoa and Nigeria

Schoeffel (1984) examines the historical development of rural women's associations in Western Samoa, which became the backbone of public health programs and played a crucial role in preventive medicine at the village level. The associations, representing members of village descent groups, wives of chiefs and orators, and wives of untitled men, were brought together by a young medical doctor in the 1930s and named Komiti Tumama (cleanliness committees). Their original tasks included removing weeds and rubbish that bred flies and mosquitoes, inspecting latrines, and supervising the use of bathing pools and drinking supplies. Their functions expanded to the organization of monthly clinics for pregnant women and children under five, staffed by public health nurses who, according to Schoeffel, were "experts in Samoan etiquette and ways of communication" (p. 211). When the nurses arrived in the morning, prayers were offered and ceremonial greeting speeches exchanged. Lunch was provided by the committee members, each item of food being announced and displayed before being consumed, according to custom. In the afternoon, sanitation inspections and inspections of household goods were carried out. The latter was based on the tradition of displaying new property or gifts, and it used the traditional competition between Samoan families for prestige to ensure that
each household had an adequate and clean supply of sleeping nets, towels, and cooking utensils. The inspections concluded with prayers and reciprocal speeches of farewell.

Schoeffel notes that although the history of the committees goes back only to the 1930s, they have become firmly integrated with Samoan culture. During her field work in the 70s, she was struck by the view people held of them as part of Samoan custom.

Samoans did not see the committees as enlightened, modern agents of primary health care but as cultural institutions as deeply rooted in the pattern of life as the council of chiefs. . . (p. 211)

The success of the committees in rural areas resulted from the use of traditional institutions to promote new practices in sanitation and health care. The system rewarded and fostered village autonomy and enhanced the status of married women. In the past decade, the support for such community-based health programs has declined. Schoeffel relates this "stagnation" to rapid socio-economic change, increasing professionalization and bureaucratization of health services, and ineffective communication between health professionals and village leaders. For example, the introduction of professional (male) sanitation inspectors into the system has given support to the notion that sanitation is now a government responsibility. A traditional voluntary female domain has become a salaried male one; the women resent the change and are not inclined to participate. Also, a demand for more efficient record-keeping and more complex medical procedures in the public health sector requires more educated nursing staff (often those fluent in English, as English is the language of training materials and WHO courses). Many of these
younger women are not skilled in the rules and conventions that govern communication between individuals and groups.

But for effective communication, familiarity and confidence with these rules and conventions is essential. Schoeffel notes that such familiarity and confidence is not acquired simply by growing up Samoan. The "etiquette of communication" is acquired slowly through observation in adulthood. This presents a problem for professional health workers, as they often spend several years training in an urban area or overseas and are removed from the milieu where crucial cultural idioms are learned.

On several occasions I have observed highly trained young professional health workers almost paralysed by anxiety and embarrassed at having to address a women's committee headed by twenty or so elderly Samoan ladies of consequence. As services and procedures in primary health care become more complex, the informed participation of women's committees in managing rural preventive medical programmes is restricted by such obstacles in communication (p. 214).

Schoeffel concludes that the professionalization of the sector for administrative efficiency further undermines the kind of health policy envisaged at Alma-Ata by removing the responsibility for primary health care even further from the community. New practices have been superimposed on, rather than woven into, the existing fabric of customs and tradition.

In contrast, a rural health program initiated in Nigeria in the mid-70s recruited village health workers who were able to communicate well in the local idiom and who had a talent for story-telling (Hilton, 1983). These people had a thorough understanding of local customs and beliefs and were respected by the various tribes, clans and religious groups represented in the villages. Their three months of training emphasized promoting
A distinctive feature of the training program, and later of the work in the villages, was the extensive use of drama, stories and songs, the traditional methods of learning among people still heavily dependent on oral communication forms. The drama and stories, "constructed" by the local people, incorporated traditional knowledge and beliefs. They built up towards a health message or towards an action which would help to solve a particular health problem. For example, one story told of a child who died of measles despite wearing an amulet that was thought to ward off disease. The use of the amulet, a common practice, was not discouraged in the story, but vaccinations and malarial prophylaxis were encouraged to make it more effective. With local props (a hoe, a water pot, drinking utensils), the health workers often performed at village meetings, weddings, and naming ceremonies.

The use of such education methods capitalized on the skills and talents of the local people, and Hilton concluded that they were used effectively to motivate people to take greater individual responsibility for preventing disease and for promoting good health. A marked decrease in the incidence of fever, conjunctivitis, neonatal tetanus, and skin infections were observed in the project area. He suggested a wider application of the approach, particularly in rural West Africa, where didactic lectures on health care are often the norm, and print materials are often not well understood due to low levels of literacy.

Such an approach to development communication is a reflection of the newer, broader approaches to development
generally. Such approaches emphasize the satisfaction of basic needs of the populations in developing countries, their quality of life, and the sustainability of development projects that are ecologically sound. Within such a framework, developing societies are encouraged to set their own goals and standards and to work towards them in their own way. Consequently, communication strategies in support of these goals should encourage the productive use of local resources, including the participation of local populations in planning and decision-making. Development problems and goals need to be defined by the people themselves, with culture being recognized as an important mediating force in the process.

In the case of Winneba, the Ghanaian town examined here, it was found that indigenous communication forms were still used and still popular. Their potential for use in health education programs, however, will depend on the ability of the health care team to recognize their value and on the team's willingness to give up control of the information and knowledge they possess and share it with an "unprofessional" group.

It has taken several decades of thinking and re-thinking on the role of communication in the development process for planners and scholars to come this far. The remainder of this chapter will review earlier approaches to development and development communication and place the recent attention accorded to local resources and community participation in that context.
Thirty years of development communication -- what have we learned?

For the past two decades, communication researchers and development planners have been re-examining the role of mass media in development and appraising its successes and failures. Prior to this reappraisal the prevailing view was optimistic -- that the mass media had enormous potential for communicating development messages, and that poor, rural, illiterate people could be informed about ways to improve their lives and be persuaded to act on the information on a scale never before possible. These "magic multipliers" could convince farmers to grow better crops and mothers to prepare more nutritious food for their families, as well as change traditional attitudes about family size, formal education, and ethnic loyalties. According to this view, the media would greatly facilitate people in "transitional societies" to cope with the changes inherent in modernization and development.

This dominant approach to communication was based on an economic model that emphasized industrialisation, capital-intensive technology and centralised planning. The guiding principle seemed to be that the only way developing countries could "progress" was to emulate Western societies. In his 1949 inaugural address, American president Harry Truman held up his country as a model to the rest of the world:

We must embark on a bold, new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half of the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant... The United States is preeminent among the nations in the development of industrial and scientific techniques. I
believe that we should make available to peace-loving people the benefits of our store of technical knowledge, in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life (CBC Radio Ideas, Nov. 1, 1990).

Belgian communication scholar Jan Servaes describes the thinking of the 1950s and 60s:

... most development thinkers stated that the problem of "underdevelopment" or "backwardness" could be solved by a more or less mechanical application of the economic and political system in the West to countries in the Third World, under the assumption that the difference was one of degree rather than of kind. The modernisation paradigm ... defines the state of underdevelopment in terms of observable, quantitative differences between "poor" and "rich" countries on the one hand, and traditional and modern sectors in the poor nations on the other. Development implies the bridging of these gaps by means of an imitative process in stages, in such a way that the traditional sectors and/or countries gradually assume the "qualities" of the modern ones (1986, p. 129).

Among the communication scholars who most strongly endorsed this view and whose works were influential throughout the 60s were Daniel Lerner and Wilbur Schramm. Lerner's The Passing of Traditional Society (1958) and Schramm's Mass Media and National Development (1964) maintained that the mass media could play a significant role in creating a climate conducive for development by disseminating new knowledge, introducing new values, and raising people's aspirations for a better life.

Lerner, a sociologist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, formulated his modernisation theory after studying several Mediterranean countries where rapid social change was evident. Focusing on the individuals involved (to the exclusion of the social, political and economic systems in which they lived), Lerner identified "empathy" as a crucial requirement for individual change. If a Turkish peasant could learn to empathize with a new and better way of life, e.g. if he could learn to want
to live in Ankara and run a grocery store rather than be satisfied with a life of subsistence farming in the village, then he would be on the way to "modernisation," to changing his status in life. New roads and improved transportation could create the necessary mobility for the peasant to see what was "out there," but mass media (newspapers and radio) could provide a vital prerequisite -- the "psychic mobility" that would raise aspirations and create the momentum for change.

Mass media thus became a crucial link in the modernisation process. As Stevenson (1988) points out, the publication of Lerner’s book in 1958 was propitious. That year, the UN General Assembly called for a program to help developing nations expand their mass media. UNESCO carried out a survey of information needs in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and upon examining its results, the Assembly encouraged its member governments to include mass media in their development plans, noting that "new techniques of communication offer special opportunities for acceleration of the education process."

Following the survey, UNESCO commissioned a study "to help give practical effect to the mass media development program." The author of this study was Wilbur Schramm, who was then director of the Institute for Communication Research at Stanford University, and his book, *Mass Media and National Development*, soon became a blueprint for development communication. In it, Schramm reviewed the research that had been done on the contribution of communication to modernisation. He concluded that the mass media were powerful mobilisers "to push economic and social development forward."
... the required amount of information and learning is so vast that only by making effective use of the great information multipliers, the mass media, can developing countries hope to provide information at the rates their timetables for development demand... (p. 246).

How fortuitous, how almost miraculous it seems that, at this moment of greatest need for swift and widespread information in the developing countries, modern mass communication should be available to multiply informational resources (p. 271).

By the 70s, however, much of the early enthusiasm was waning. Development theorists and practitioners were disappointed with the results of many of the efforts that used communication as a development tool. In some instances, where people were willing to accept change, political and economic circumstances worked against it. In others, the introduction of "modern" practices were disruptive and incongruous. (Coca-Cola became a household word in countries where most of the population lacked access to clean water). It was repeatedly shown that development campaigns often benefitted the more advantaged sectors of the community, rather than the poor, widening the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" and consolidating the position of elites. The majority of the population was often forced into what Ivan Illich called "modernized poverty," living in wretched conditions in urban slums.

Critiques of the paradigm

During the 70s, the modernisation paradigm was criticised by many scholars on various grounds. Golding (1974) examined three approaches to development theory underlying much of that decade's communication research. First, the "index approach", whereby a compilation of statistics such as GNP per capita, the percentage
of population enrolled in school, the number of radios, newspapers, cinemas and telephones in use was presented as an index of development. The premise of this approach was that such resources were the material base of advanced societies, and that traditional societies could be made modern by their acquisition. Second, the approach placed undue emphasis on the individual as the unit of analysis. The mass media would diffuse information about fertilizers and new farming methods, and those who were most exposed to the messages (usually the better educated and the better off) would adopt the innovations. Those who failed to heed the message were often characterised as fatalistic, superstitious, and lacking in achievement motivation. The social structure which might have more cogently explained the behavior of the non-adopters was ignored. Third, the approach concentrated on endogenous factors of development to the exclusion of exogenous factors such as the terms of international trade, tied aid, and the dependency fostered by technical assistance programs.

At a seminar of Latin American communication researchers in 1975, participants critiqued the prevailing methodologies and found them wanting. Among their concerns were: an uncritical adoption of North American and European methodologies and a lack of more creative ones appropriate to the region; a preference for analysing communication phenomena out of the context of political, socioeconomic, and cultural variables; and a bias towards the status quo that presented functional adjustments to the existing system, without questioning its validity (Beltran, 1976).
Even Wilbur Schramm, one of the people most committed to the modernisation paradigm, eventually admitted:

I should have been more sceptical about the applicability of the Western model of development. I should have paid more attention to the problem of integrating mass media with local activity. Above all, I should have given more thought than I did to the social requirements and uncertainties of development and in particular to the cultural differences that make development almost necessarily different, culture to culture, country to country (in Dissanayake, 1981).

Central to the new orientation that emerged was the concept of local participation in development programs.

"Participation" -- buzzword of the 80s

A considerable amount of attention has been devoted to this participatory approach in the development literature in the 80s, drawn from experience in administration, agriculture, and health (Esman and Uphoff, 1984; Salmen, 1987; Montgomery, 1988; Goulet, 1989). In a study for the World Health Organization, Oakley (1989) includes a variety of interpretations for the term:

Participation means, in its broadest sense, to sensitize people and thus to increase the receptivity and ability of rural people to respond to development programmes, as well as to encourage local initiatives... Participation includes people’s involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes... their sharing in the benefits of development programmes, and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes... Participation involves... organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations... (p. 9).

These interpretations reflect quite different views on the role of participation in development. A basic distinction is that participation is seen by some as a means, and by others as an end in itself. On the one hand, governments and development planners see the participation of local leaders and groups in their
programs as a means of improving efficiency, reaching isolated rural audiences with predetermined messages regarding health care, nutrition, agriculture, etc. An example is the co-opting of the kelian, or ward head, in family planning programs in Indonesia (Astawa, 1980). A traditionally respected figure in the local community, the kelian receives a short course in family planning, registers all couples in the community, and records their adoption of contraceptives on a large map in the community hall. He works with field workers from the planned parenthood association to encourage the adoption of family planning. Similarly, in India, the Jagran troupe, using mime to create comic plots based on local themes (large families, malnutrition) was praised by a social worker for its contribution: "What we could not teach in six months about health, nutrition, and population education, mime has done in a one hour programme" (Kidd, 1984, p. 102).

On the other hand, when participation is seen as an end in itself, the emphasis is on building up confidence and solidarity among marginalised groups. It is an on-going process, which responds to local needs and changing circumstances. It extends well beyond the life of any particular development project, and its goal is to eventually empower people to determine their own priorities and improve their own well-being. In so doing, they often work outside existing institutional structures.

Although the discourse of "empowerment" and "autonomy" is attractive, both to scholars and the rural poor, Midgley (1986) warns that the idealism and rhetoric of the concept of participation "needs to be tempered with a realistic assessment
of the possible" (p. 158).

The concept of the small community as a cohesive and integrated identity fighting for justice against powerful external forces is inspired by the romanticism of populist thought rather than a serious analysis of community life and its complex characteristics and dynamics (p. 35).

He concludes:

It is naive to argue that state involvement in social development is superfluous and that local communities in the Third World can solve the serious problems of poverty and deprivation wholly through their own efforts. But it is equally naive to assume that a cosy relationship between the centralized, bureaucratic state and the local community will emerge and that political elites, professionals and administrators will readily agree to the devolution of their authority to ordinary people (p. vii).

Those who have explored changing state/society relationships in contemporary Africa (Hyden, 1986; Rothchild and Chazan, 1988) have concluded that citizens often show great reluctance to participate in national schemes, having been repeatedly disappointed in the state's capabilities. As skepticism rises concerning the effectiveness and legitimacy of state actions, people become creative in circumventing the power and determination of officialdom. Particularly in Africa, where governments have extolled the virtues of self-help but failed to provide the resources necessary to promote it, "community development" has often been seen as little more than a slogan which brings few tangible benefits.

... corruption, maladministration and inefficiency were rampant and it often seemed that the only beneficiaries of community development were the workers and officials who staffed the creaking community development bureaucracies (Midgley, p. 18).

No matter how ineffective or dysfunctional the role of the state in development activities may be, its existence cannot be ignored. In the long run, stability hinges on the extent to which
nonformal structures are accommodated within the formal system.

Summary

The proverb used in the title of this thesis -- the new mat is woven over the old -- reflects the complementarity of continuity and change. Only by understanding what has gone before can we begin to use that knowledge to promote new practices. Some recent attention has been directed to understanding traditional cultural knowledge and how to apply it in development contexts. According to Daniel Morales-Gomez, director of the social policy unit, at the International Development Research Centre, this perspective implies

... going beyond functional aspects of traditional knowledge to comprehend the complex interaction among artistic and spiritual practices, language and communication, patterns of social reproduction, practices in community governance, and management of natural and human resources. In sum, it implies a different way of looking at what development is about (IDRC Reports, 1993, p. 5).

The following chapter documents the progression of some noteworthy experiments in community media, particularly in Africa, and establishes the significance of oral communication forms and their role in making meaning. Chapter 3 introduces Winneba and discusses the methodology of the field work undertaken there, while chapter 4 documents the indigenous

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3The Indigenous Knowledge and Development Monitor, first published in 1993, provides a forum for those interested in indigenous knowledge and the role it can play in participatory approaches to sustainable development. It is produced jointly by the Centre for International Research and Advisory Networks (CIRAN) in the Netherlands, the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge for Agriculture and Rural Development (CIKARD) at Iowa State University, and the Leiden Ethnosystems and Development Program.
communication forms found to be still practised and popular. Chapter 5 provides a background to health care in Ghana and current efforts being made by the health care team to provide information and services. Chapter 6 considers the application of the communication forms identified to current health care problems and practices.

Endnote

Adekunle's study, carried out in three residential areas of Ibadan, concluded that time, attitude, and ignorance on the part of mothers were three major impediments to child immunization. Several of the responses still ring true for women's circumstances in Ghana. For example:

"My children got immunization against smallpox because the man who vaccinated them came to the market. I cannot go to the hospital to vaccinate my children against other diseases because I cannot leave my trade. There is nobody to look after them for me. Please help us tell the government to bring vaccination to us in the market" (Mrs A., a 38-year-old petty trader, and mother of six).

"I did not get my first child immunized because the father did not tell me to do so. But I tried to get the second one immunized and could not complete the dose because we had to go to Abeokuta, my husband's home town, for his uncle's burial, for six weeks. By the time I came back, I have forgotten about the immunization" (Mrs. P., a 23-year-old woman with two children, one of whom had polio).
II. PARTICIPATION THROUGH "ORAMEDIA": MAKING MEANING; PROVIDING CONTEXT

Because mass media are able to reach isolated and dispersed communities from a central sending point, they have been used to transmit news, information and entertainment from capital cities and urban areas to the rural periphery in many developing countries. Program content is centrally planned and universally delivered, with little attention paid to tailoring messages or targeting audiences. The impact of the content on rural audiences is not closely examined by editors, scriptwriters and producers, and the opportunity for feedback from those audiences is often limited. Media organizations are generally large and powerful institutions, and in many developing countries they are licensed by government. Few of them welcome interference from "outside."

Samarajiva and Shields (1988) note that although satellite technology has created greater possibilities for rural telecommunications, much of the writing on this latest "revolution" assumes a need to connect rural points to the city:

The choice between technologies primarily conducive to local communication and technologies that link rural communities to the metropolitan centers to the possible detriment of local networks is not considered worth examining (p. 15).

In most countries of sub-Saharan Africa, governments play a supreme role in the ownership, management and control of radio and television broadcasting systems. The usual rationale for this situation is that the state can best use the media for socio-economic, cultural, and political development purposes.
Two Ghanaians, however, Ansah (1986) and Boafo (1988), have articulated a common criticism of these officially declared intentions. They charge that the production, processing and dissemination of information is often limited to a small professional elite or to those who wield economic or political power. The poorer majority’s access to the media in most countries has been minimal.

Ugboajah (1972, 1979) was one of the first African researchers to identify rural audiences as "non-participatory" in terms of their use of mass media. Ugboajah concluded that the effectiveness of broadcasting had been minimal for development in rural Nigeria because it had failed to establish an interdependence between the traditions of the villagers and the new technology. As a result, after several decades¹ most rural dwellers still depended on traditional information sources that included "aspects of religion such as divination, mythology, witchcraft, and cult societies, as well as the chief’s courts, the elders’ square, secret and title societies, and the village market square, around which a web of group affiliations center" (1979, p. 42).²

Ugboajah noted that the "gongman" (the village announcer or chief messenger) occupied an important position in the diffusion

¹The national radio service began in 1952; television was introduced a decade later.

²Ugboajah’s contention is supported by Braimoh (1992), and Okunna (1992), who argue that the socio-cultural realities of life in rural Nigeria show their populations, particularly women, still largely dependent on interpersonal face-to-face communication.
of messages within the belief systems of rural Nigerians. As a result of a number of field studies, he concluded that among the Yorubas, the messenger served as the palace liaison officer, carrying news and information from the king to the people, and relaying the people's views back to him. In Bendel state, the gongman enriched the skeletal messages given to him by the chief with songs and riddles. Among the Ashanti in Ghana, the announcer was "an eloquent interpreter" of the chief's messages, well-tutored in traditions and proverbs. "His message begins in the chief's court and is transmitted to strategic points throughout the village -- the market square, road junctions, village entrances, and major paths leading to farms and shrines" (p. 43).

By 1985, Ugboajah had coined the term "oramedia" to designate traditional media represented by "a diffusion network of lower chiefs, age groups, the marketplace, market women's organizations, traditional priests, stall heads, village teachers and the indomitable village crier" (p. 167). Songs, drums, dances, proverbs and parables form part of the network. Ugboajah identified a need to systematically document the symbols that exist in traditional media channels and to clarify how these symbols might be integrated into development communication programs. The case study in this thesis is a contribution to this documentation.

The communication forms discussed here have been defined by Jussawalla and Hughes (1984) as:

... the social and cultural channels of communication which form an integral part of the heritage of a people and which
usually pre-date modern mass media methods. These systems are embedded within the traditional mores of the people and contribute significantly to their history and culture. Included within this category are folk media (story-telling, puppetry, folk drama, folk songs, folk art, shadow plays, praise poetry, etc.) and traditional communication networks (traditional midwives, shamans and healers, market and gathering places, ceremonies and celebrations, traditional leaders, etc.) (p. 255).

Such systems have relied historically on channels which obtain their authority from the mores, traditions, and customs of the people they serve. Their strength lies in their community orientation.

Dissanayake (1977) has identified these media as having several strengths. They have a credibility, particularly with rural populations, that modern mass media often lack. Press, radio, television and cinema are often "alien and elitist in outlook," and those on the periphery of modern life tend to identify them with centres of power. They are readily intelligible because they employ the local idiom, and they are readily accessible to even the poorest members of the community, whereas radio and television may be beyond their means and newspapers beyond their comprehension. Finally, these media forms generally demand active participation in the communication process, and they allow for audience input and response.

As a communication system, these forms are small-scale; their standards are often not "professional," and they do not reach a mass audience in the sense that large numbers of people are not reached immediately and simultaneously. Yet these characteristics need not preclude their use in development planning. Although planning on a national basis is likely the
most cost- and time-efficient method from a planner's point of view, it may not be the most effective in the long run from the recipient's point of view. The concept of "nation" is itself problematic in many countries -- people living within arbitrarily-defined borders speak different languages, follow different religions, and have different histories and different cultural traits. These differences are often seen by planners to be complex and cumbersome, and too difficult to integrate into national plans. Justice (1986) describes the situation well (in Nepal) when she writes of "the momentum of international health policy, which inundates local realities as it sweeps downward from policy-making circles in Kathmandu" (p.147).

Experiments in "oramedia"

Studies of the use of theatre arts -- song, dance and drama -- in development have made a considerable contribution to the literature on communication for development, particularly in Asia (Kidd and Colletta, 1980; Wang and Dissanayake, 1984; Thomas, 1989). Kidd (1979) notes that organizations such as UNESCO and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) have often promoted theatre as an indigenous medium in development communication projects, particularly in relation to family planning. He recalls one of the earliest uses of drama as an educational tool in Africa was in Ghana after World War II, when the colonial government used it as part of its mass education program. Drama -- "the most truly Ghanaian audio-visual aid," --
drew upon a nation-wide aptitude, and was intimately related to local customs and tradition.

Inter-agency teams of field workers travelled from village to village, organizing programs of drama, discussion, and demonstration. The technical departments -- agriculture and health -- chose and shaped the messages; the community development department provided the team leadership and skills in mass extension work. Campaign topics included cocoa disease eradication, local government taxation, sanitation, child care, literacy and family planning. Lines were improvised around an agreed script and stage-craft was kept simple (p.4).

Kidd points out that this form of communication as it was used was a one-way process. It was not a means of engaging the villagers in dialogue about problems they had identified; rather, the program was planned, messages chosen and scripts prepared by headquarters staff with minimal consultation with rural people. This type of theatrical production, often promoted as a bottom-up alternative to mass media, in fact operates in a similar fashion, with centralized goal-setting and production and limited local dialogue and participation.

The cases included in this chapter, drawn from west, east and southern Africa, were selected because they provide a progression of experiences in the use of oral communication forms to encourage community development. The Botswana case is representative of many of the early efforts in the use of popular theatre; the Sierra Leone case is a more refined version of the same popular theatre approach, while the Tanzanian case incorporated a variety of theatrical forms into established dance forms particularly conducive to women's participation. The forms observed in Winneba and presented in this thesis are seen as an
extension of this work, broadening the boundaries so that a variety of alternative forms can be considered in furthering community participation in local development.

The Botswana experience

Laedza Batanani, (Community Awakening), was the first experiment in using popular theatre in community development in Botswana. Seen as a medium for encouraging participation, raising issues, fostering discussion, and promoting collective action, it was started in 1974 in the Bokalaka area of northern Botswana by a community leader and two expatriate adult educators (Kidd and Byram, 1983). They wanted to motivate and mobilise the community around important local issues, eg. family and marital conflict, a government land reform proposal, and health care issues such as tuberculosis, venereal disease, nutrition and sanitation. Their assumption was that a major constraint on development in the area was people's apathy and indifference, and that they needed to be "awakened" to become involved. Villagers were good at drama and enjoyed doing it, so it seemed a good medium for ensuring active participation.

It began as an annual event, where a team of extension workers and community leaders toured the six major villages in the area with a program of popular theatre performances focusing on local issues. Following the performances, the actors moved into the audience to form discussion groups and try to reach some consensus on action to be taken. Local people's participation,
however, was limited to the implementation stage; the planning and content of the performances was left to civil servants and community leaders who often had their own agendas. Their views tended to influence not only the selection of issues but also the ways in which the issues were raised. (Traditional healers, for instance, were negatively stereotyped in plays performed by health educators). The focus of attention was often on technical solutions rather than on changes in social relations.

Kidd and Byram concluded that the effectiveness of Laedza Batanani was compromised by an inadequate understanding of the power structures within which it was working and a faulty assumption of a community of shared interests. Although the theatre performances brought people together to discuss issues, "people remained inactive because there was no commonly accepted institutional framework in which initiative could be taken" (p. 287). The authors recommended moving away from a community-wide approach in which the more powerful members dominate, to a more strategic approach directed at specific groups, eg. women, and a shift to a more sustained program of group organization and education, where popular theatre would be given a more defined, less prominent role.

The Sierra Leone experience

Lessons learned from the Botswana experience in the 70s were effectively put to the test in Sierra Leone in the 80s. Rechristened "community theatre," it was chosen by a group of
adult educators at Fourah Bay College in Freetown because it was seen to provide

... a graphic and vivid forum where dialogue can take place without the kinds of antagonisms that might well result in directly 'real' situations. ... This new genre is accessible to large numbers of people, based in local social, cultural and other realities, expressed in the local language and idioms, and uses the people's art forms such as music and drumming, singing and dancing, miming and story-telling. Thus it can be a very effective problem-solving and two-way communication tool for community introspection and action (Malamah-Thomas, 1987, p. 61).

An expected spinoff was a restructuring of the traditional community extension process in that the extension worker would be less a dispenser of services and information and more of an animateur, a facilitator in stimulating community discussion and action. These workers accompanied local liaison people chosen for their knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic realities of three selected villages. They spent several days collecting and analysing data and identifying problems with the villagers during visits. They shared their chores and exchanged ideas and experiences. Through this process, problems were ranked for priority and story lines were formed around generalized problems that were specific to each community. The local people had input from the beginning.

The first theatrical performances highlighted the identified problems and were followed by discussion, analysis, and proposed strategies for solution. But the process did not end with discussion. Further "solution productions" were performed, which incorporated the identified problems and likely solutions and launched collective action, i.e., building pit latrines to reduce
the incidence of diarrhoea and other water-borne diseases.

The process was a holistic learning experience for all involved, from the first stage of establishing rapport and mutual confidence to the last stage of working on follow-up strategies. The onus was on the extension workers to give up their control of the process and to appreciate the input from the local participants. It required "absolute and unconditional respect for the native intelligence of the villagers," (p. 66) and demanded a willingness to listen to their views.

The process described by Malamah-Thomas in Sierra Leone has evolved to a fairly standardized procedure where participants learn skills in action-oriented field research and problem analysis, as well as in performance organization and discussion and evaluation techniques. These are not learned in isolation but in the context of particular problems and issues identified by local communities (Epskamp and Swart, 1991).

However, Malamah-Thomas points out that no theatre for development process can claim to be prescriptive. Strategies and methodologies need to be worked out according to particular objectives, circumstances and resources. What has worked well in one country or region "cannot simply be plugged into a new context" (p. 66). Yet what may seem at first glance to be a limitation may in fact not be one. As has been noted earlier, given the universal variety and diversity of circumstances and cultural resources, local efforts are probably the more realistic option. In his study of mass media and village life in India,
Hartmann, (1989) concluded that structures of inequality -- between rural and urban dwellers, between Hindus and other religious groups, between literates and illiterates-- pose a major obstacle to change in that society. In his view, locally-based communication strategies show the most promise of success. As a corollary, centrally-driven strategies show little promise at all.

The Tanzania experience

A final case of significance here is the Namionga Theatre Project in southern Tanzania. The project assessed the level of women's participation as communicators in the official media used for a Child Survival for Development (CSD) program. It also explored the extent to which women would participate if indigenous media familiar to them were employed.

As documented by Mlama (1991), the findings of a survey on the media used by CSD officials in Namionga village showed there was minimal participation of women as communicators. At information sessions, formal meeting procedures were followed -- usually an address by the chairman or official guest, followed by questions and discussion. Women generally felt too uncomfortable or shy to speak, or did not have adequate fluency in Kiswahili. When CSD officials (usually male) visited homes, they often passed on information on immunization and child care in the form of directives, and what were intended as seminar sessions at the health posts often turned into lectures with little contribution
from the mothers.

Yet Mlama points out that in terms of daily interpersonal communication, women are often considered more communicative than men:

It is true also that women are often outstanding singers, poetesses, storytellers, and dancers, relaying and interpreting observations on realities of life. Traditional education rituals such as initiation rites for girls communicate considerable knowledge about life in the society; women are the main communicators. They use song and dance to deliver information about sex, child birth, child care, social relations and responsibilities relating to family and society at large. Story-telling, through which much knowledge is imparted to children about the virtues, morals and attitudes accepted in the society, is often the domain of women (p. 33).

She concluded that women are quiet when it comes to contemporary communication for development because "their" kind of media -- media which facilitate their active participation -- have largely been ignored by planners. The popular theatre project, in which women's participation was monitored at each stage, supports her point. After animateurs collected information about local problems related to child survival -- unfair division of labour between men and women, inadequate social services, low income, and poor communication between spouses -- three indigenous dance groups created performances using whatever artistic form they chose. The first group, Mandelela, used dance and story-telling to deal with marital problems such as irresponsible fathers, the effects of divorce and promiscuicy on children, and women's unfair workload. The second, Teleza, exposed corrupt practices by water technicians through mask-dance and drama, and the third, Makadabada, portrayed the problems of
excessive drinking and bad leadership and their effects on children.

All three groups created performances centered on their dances and incorporated other forms, such as poetic drama, dramatic skits, mask-dances, and story-telling. Using these forms to "concertize" their problems, the women highlighted their own perceptions on the root of the problems, and the possible solutions. During the post-performance discussion, however, which reverted to the public meeting format, only three out of 63 women present spoke. They restricted their participation to comments among themselves.

The women enjoyed the process of theatre creation. Their familiarity and identification with and mastery of artistic skills contributed significantly to their level of participation. They felt at home with the process. The same women who were silent at public meetings became very active as singers, dancers, story-tellers and dramatists. Since they possessed the skills to use these media, they used them effectively and with ease.

Lessons from the "oramedia" approach

The sum of the experiences in popular theatre detailed above reveal important lessons for those working in community development. Early efforts, such as those in Botswana, although popular, had little sustainability. There was little follow-up

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Some samples of these perceptions, as they were articulated in song, are included at the end of this chapter. See Endnote 1.
support for initiatives, and the communal approach toward problem-solving often revealed contradictory interests. Later efforts in Sierra Leone benefitted from incorporating local interests and input from the beginning, in planning and content. Extension workers became facilitators rather than directors. In the Tanzanian project, not only was women’s input sought, but they were encouraged to communicate it through media particularly familiar and comfortable to them. These lessons need to be borne in mind when indigenous Ghanaian forms are examined later in the thesis.

All of the popular theatre experiences revealed one common strength. They are forms of communication that encourage open and frank portrayal and discussion of sensitive issues in a society. Ordinary people can express themselves frankly on matters of direct concern to them. At the same time, one must look beyond the expression of discontent and consider the room for change that exists in the larger environment. Some of the criticism in the songs performed by the Namionga women, for example, is very harsh, directly attacking local traditional leaders and government councillors for their lack of attention to serious problems. Given that vested interests and long-standing loyalties almost always exist in any society, the women’s concerns may be deliberately ignored or mocked. (In the post-performance discussion, when one man angrily refuted the women’s portrayal of irresponsible fathers, no woman responded to the charge). Following a study of wife-beating among junior staff at
the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, Owens-Ibie (1992) concluded that development communication programs for women would be more effective if the social constraints of women at the grassroots were recognized, and if they were designed to include men in problem-solving and conflict resolution.

Despite the limitations, veteran researcher and planner Bella Mody concludes that the hope for development communication lies in grassroots groups and communities organising their own communication system to meet their information needs. She suggests that local communities use low-cost communication hardware and follow particular message design strategies to share meaning (her emphasis) among their own membership, "where sender and receiver are one" (1991, p. 96). The significance of "oramedia" in sharing meaning and meaning-making has not received much attention in the development literature. One exception is Obeng-Quaidoo, who, in a 1985 paper that urges researchers to pay closer attention to African "core values," notes the importance of "meaning sharing" between communicator and audience. He points out that the concept includes more than understanding or comprehension of a particular language or message, i.e., an African broadcaster may tell his listening audience that using contraceptives reduces unwanted children and over-population and he would be understood. But he may not have shared meaning.

For the question of having one, three, five or seven children is an ontological one, and to communicate meaningfully the communicator must share the views of inheritance, survival after death . . . immortality through the male child . . . and blessings that society attaches to fecundity (p. 116).
The context of the message and the message situation helps to clarify meaning by reference to particular values and/or events. According to Stern and Henderson (1993), context includes the social, political, historical, psychological and aesthetic factors that shape the way we understand the text. The communicator, the "performer", lies at the intersection between text and context. In performance situations, such as those created by the Namionga women in Tanzania described earlier, a complex communication context is evoked whereby a central idea is brought into creative harmony with other related forms of expression. These, in turn, reinforce the central idea in order to optimize its communication potential. The Namionga performances centred on dance but incorporated other forms, including poetry, drama and story-telling. According to Agovi (1988) verbal expression, even in the most prosaic context, communicates most effectively when embellished by other forms. It is the performance situation which allows such embellishment, as words, music, movement and visual effects are harmonised. The remainder of this chapter considers these embellishments, their function and purpose.

**Ways of knowing**

In oral cultures, restriction of words to sound determines not only modes of expression but also thought processes (Ong, 1982). You know what you can recall. Devices to aid recall -- *aides mémoires* -- thus become essential.
to solve effectively the problem of retaining and retrieving carefully articulated thought, you have to do your thinking in mnemonic patterns, shaped for ready oral recurrence. Your thought must come into being in heavily rhythmic, balanced patterns, in repetitions or antitheses, in alliterations and assonances, in epithetic and other formulary expressions, in standard thematic settings. . . in proverbs which are constantly heard by everyone so that they come to mind readily and which themselves are patterned for retention and ready recall, or in other mnemonic form. Serious thought is intertwined with memory systems (p. 34).

The more sophisticated orally patterned thought is, the more it is likely to be marked by set expressions skilfully used. Ong notes as an example Chinua Achebe’s novel, *No Longer at Ease*, which draws directly on Igbo oral tradition.4

In an oral culture, knowledge cannot be managed in elaborate, abstract categories. Rather, stories of human action are used to store, organize and communicate. Substantial narratives exist -- stories of the Trojan wars among the ancient Greeks, coyote stories among native Americans, Anansi (spider) stories in Africa and the Caribbean. In such stories, written conventions such as a temporal sequence and climactic linear plot are disregarded. The narrator possesses supreme skill in managing flashbacks and other episodic techniques. Lancaster (1977) has dubbed the form in Thailand the "jellyfish system", built about three spines: movement, music and words. She writes that the most sophisticated and intelligent way to appreciate the system is not to look for a starting point in order to trace a developmental pattern, but to be aware of as much of the total

4 An illustrative excerpt from another of Achebe’s novels is included at the end of this chapter. See Endnote 2.
area as possible at the same time.\textsuperscript{5} Agovi (1988), describing the Avudwene festival of the Nzema people in Ghana, notes how praise texts and exchanges of verbal insults go on simultaneously with drumming and dancing sessions in the same location, and that participants are compelled to take account of all of these at the same time, in order to properly define the sense of occasion.

Lancaster's observation of a Buddhist monk's "sermon" -- ballads about former lives of the Buddha, encapsulating morals and parables and precepts -- records that a large audience was held spellbound for three hours, and that they often requested her tapes of the performance throughout the ensuing year, for funeral wakes, housewarmings, and working parties. In contrast, an entertaining film containing a health message -- "the most coherent, logical, smooth Thai production I saw in two years" (p. 177) -- was enjoyed by the same audience for the moment, but quickly forgotten.

A performer such as the Thai monk does not convey "information" in the sense of a transfer of data from an individual to a group. The person, according to Ong, is "remembering":

\begin{quote}
. . . remembering in a curiously public way -- remembering not a memorized text, for there is no such thing, nor any verbatim succession of words, but the themes and formulas that he has heard other singers sing. He remembers these always differently, as rhapsodized or stitched together in his own way on this particular occasion for this particular audience. 'Song
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{5}Ben Okri, the Nigerian who won the 1991 Booker Prize for his novel \textit{The Famished Road}, has adapted this discursive style to his written expression in English. See Endnote 3.
Finnegan (1970) is one of the few people to have recognized and documented the significance of the delivery aspect of oral communication in African societies. In her documentation, Finnegan points out that plays and poetry rely for their effectiveness and for their aesthetic appeal on expressiveness of tone, gesture, facial expression, dramatic use of pause and rhythm, the interplay of passion, dignity, or humor, receptivity to the reactions of the audience, etc. Such devices are not merely embellishments superadded to the already existent literary work. but an integral as well as flexible part of its full realization as a work of art (p. 3).

When poems or plays are transcribed on to the printed page, they present "only a shadow" of their original form. She quotes a description of a Lamba narrator from Zambia:

It would need a combination of phonograph and kinematograph to reproduce a tale as it is told. Every muscle of face and body spoke, a swift gesture often supplying the place of a whole sentence (p. 6)

A master of one genre may not feel competent to perform a different type -- she/he may know the words but may not manage the necessary subleties of tone and style and the required voice quality.

A further, related characteristic of oral performance and one that is particularly appropriate to the current discussion is

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6 An interesting recreation of this kind of "remembrance" occurs in Bruce Chatwin's novel The Songlines, set in Australian aboriginal society. See Endnote 4.

7 Finnegan's use of the term "oral literature" is one Ong finds "preposterous", in that it "reveals our inability to represent to our own minds a heritage of verbally organized materials except as some variant of writing" (p. 11).
the practice of improvisation. The extent and the kind of innovation varies with performer and occasion, but Finnegan points out that one of the most striking characteristics of oral communication is its "verbal variability". She cites as an example the omwevugi of Uganda, who, when reciting Ankole praise poetry, has to rely a great deal on creativity to bring new beauty and interest to stereotyped pieces. By an ingenious use of vocabulary, he can repeat identical themes time and time again, "always with a different and startling turn of phrase" (p. 8).

Indeed, such stories are constantly transformed by professional narrators, and there is no standard form. The scope of the artist to improvise comes in the exact choice of a word or phrase, the use of asides or repetition, and in stylistic devices such as the use of gongs, drums, or rattles.

It is true that many collections of African stories give the impression of fixity just because they have been written down and printed. But in fact, in most African cases that have been fully examined, this variability of tales according to the teller and the occasion is one of their most apparent characteristics. There is no one correct version or form (p. 329).

A common Akan story-telling form, anansesem, is usually performed in the evenings. But when the same story is used as an illustrative anecdote in conversational context, it becomes an ebe. The story undergoes a structural transformation -- it is abbreviated, is performed without song intervals, and is minimally embellished (Yankah, 1989). In this context, "content and appropriate application are given greater priority over histrionics and style of telling" (p. 93).

The occasion of the telling may be the most noticeable
a piece of oral literature tends to be affected by such factors as the general purpose and atmosphere of the gathering at which it is rendered, recent episodes in the minds of performer and audience, or even the time of year and propinquity of the harvest (Finnegan, p. 12).

A further essential ingredient is the audience, which is often directly involved in performance. The participation may be formalized, as in a familiar call-and-response format, or where the audience sings the chorus while the narrator improvises the verse. Or the audience may break in to the performance with their own remarks, questions or criticism. An example of a Yoruba *ijala* artist being corrected by a member of the audience may be used to illustrate:

I beg to differ; that is not correct
You have deviated from the path of accuracy. . . .

To which the performer may reply:

Let not the civet-cat trespass on the cane rat’s track
Let the cane rat avoid trespassing on the civet-cat’s path
Let each animal follow the smooth stretch of its own road (p. 11).

The response is highly metaphorical, but metaphor and the oblique reference are well understood forms of the genre. In her work in India, Malik (nd) recalls the reaction of the Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Health to a play containing subtle family planning messages presented by a *Jatra* group. (*Jatra*, the traditional folk theatre of Bengal, dates back to the
15th century. It is usually performed in song and verse, but humorous prose portions contain socio-political commentary on contemporary themes). Ministry officials initially rejected the play because family planning information was not specifically stressed. But Malik points out that the stylized form is one Indian audiences can relate to and that because a message is unobtrusive does not mean that it is not effectively communicated or understood. Reddi (1989) supports her view, and Yankah (1992) describes how "verbal indirection" is part of a whole system of indirect strategies of behavior that permeate Ghanaians' communicative behavior:

...going through an intermediary to reach a dignitary is a sign of respect. Where an intermediary employs verbal indirection in accomplishing this role, we find a display of indirection at two levels: as part of protocol, and as a verbal strategy (p. 86).

Stories and songs continue to serve as media through which sensitive messages may be transmitted, albeit obliquely. During the Acheampong regime (1971-1978) songs that alluded to corruption and social injustice through well-known folktales were subsequently banned from broadcast (van der Geest and Asante-Darko, 1982).

A taxonomy of forms

In an effort to further our understanding of traditional communication forms, Wilson(1987)\(^6\) began a systematic

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\(^6\)The original version of Wilson's paper appeared in Africa Media Review, Vol 1, No. 2, pp. 87-104. The excerpts used here are from an expanded version prepared for the African Council for
classification of these forms, based on a study carried out in the Cross River area of Nigeria. In his introduction, Wilson points out that there is often a certain degree of confusion and misapprehension about what constitutes these forms, the general notion being that what qualifies as "traditional" are the outdated and primitive systems that have survived as relics in many developing countries. This same view often envisages traditional forms and more modern ones as being mutually antagonistic. A better understanding of the structures, patterns, processes and uses of these media could enhance their application to, and integration into, development programs.

Several of Wilson's categories are classes of musical instruments and the individuals and groups who make music, confirming Gray's contention that:

In the African world, music has played such a central role in the life of its peoples for so long that there is often no separate word for it in indigenous languages. Like religion, music permeates the societies of sub-Saharan Africa in a way difficult to understand in the West. An essential vehicle for communicating with God and the ancestors, a key determinant in rites of passage from birth to death, a tool for healing the ill, educating the young, settling disputes and entertaining the communities of both rural and urban Africa, music is perhaps the essential foodstuff for the African mind, body, and spirit. . . . to understand music is to understand life itself (1991, p. 1).

Included in Wilson's classification are idiophones -- instruments from which sound is produced by manipulating the material from which they are made -- e.g. gongs, bells, rattles; membranophones -- instruments which produce sound through the vibration of membranes -- e.g. drums made from skin or leather;
and aerophones -- instruments which produce sound as a result of the vibration of a column of air -- e.g. flutes, whistles, reed pipes, horns and trumpets.

Also included are forms of symbolic representation "understood within the context of a known social event and an accompanying verbal message" (p. 25). Wilson draws his examples from the Efik-Ibibio-Igbo people of the Cross River area: the fresh, unfolding frond of the palm tree, tied and shaped in different ways to convey different meanings; a decorated stick made from the outer part of a dry raffia palm branch; and other media which are understood through their traditional associations, such as kola nuts, the unopened bud of a palm frond, charcoal, a white pigeon or fowl, feathers and cowrie shells. Colors and their combinations, particularly on cloth, are also documented, as are forms of "extra-mundane" communication such as chants, rituals, invocations and libations.

Wilson admits to a lack of standardized language with which to categorize traditional communication forms, but he has begun to teach these forms, their principles and practices in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Cross River State. His teaching module has been included in a set of materials published by the African Council for Communication Education in Nairobi and distributed to journalism and communication departments in colleges and universities around the continent. Warren (1990) has begun a classification of Akan verbal, visual and performance arts, using an ethnoscientific
approach (based on linguistic theory) that aims to identify the types of criteria applied in judging the aesthetic appropriateness of an indigenous art form, be it a court drama, a kente cloth, or a sculpture.

Summary

The community media experiments described in this chapter show the significance of oral communication forms as credible and legitimate ones in African societies. The aesthetics of a performance situation and the subtleties of nuance seem particularly important elements of these forms. In Winneba town, introduced in the next chapter, many of these forms are an integral part of community life. The grace of an adziwa dancer and her attention to the intricate steps combines with the quality of drumming and the "sweetness" of the cantor's voice to produce a funeral experience that is aesthetically pleasing and meaningful. At ceremonial occasions, citizens in their best cloth form a procession to greet the seated chiefs, themselves splendidly attired in kente and special sandals. Gold-topped linguist staffs symbolizing clan totems, fly whisks, umbrellas and jewellery communicate status to the knowledgeable viewer, while the pouring of libation to the ancestors adds to the dignity and solemnity of the event.9

9Warren (1986) notes that seven basic "virtues of grace" are requested during the libation ceremony: life and good health; God's grace; peace of the world; fertility of sex, potency and procreativity; good eye sight; good hearing power; and rainfall and general prosperity of the land and state.
Endnotes

1. Excerpts from a Namionga theatre group performance:

   We congratulate the donors
   for bringing us this program
   The program of child survival and development
   The program insists that a child gets all the services
   The child should get enough food plus all the drugs
   We have the food, the problem is water plus the drugs
   Those of you who are responsible (for the water and drugs problem)
   Are the ones who cause child-deaths
   A curse to you all
   May you be cursed properly in the whole district
   We pray God that you be cursed properly wherever you are.

   If I were the village chairman
   I would allocate land to the youth in order
   to strengthen the economy
   Where is the land, the uncles don’t want to let go
   If I were the village chairman
   I would allocate land to the youth
   In order to strengthen our economy
   The youth are loitering because they have no work

   When the fertilizers come they are given to the well to do
   Plans should be done to provide fertilizers for everybody

   If I were the councillor
   I would follow up on the issue of water
   To improve child survival
   Where will the water come from, those with
   private wells bribe (the water technicians)
   so as not to pump the water to this place

   A husband who only brings forth children
   but does not know how to bring them up
   is a big shame.
   See this one, there is
   this child and then this and another one in
   the mother’s stomach.

2. In Achebe’s novel, Arrow of God, the chief priest is telling one of his sons why it is necessary to send him to church:

   I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eyes
   there. If there is nothing in it you will come back. But if
   there is something there you will bring home my share. The world
   is like a Mask, dancing. If you want to see it well you do not
   stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not
befriend the white man today will be saying 'had we known' tomorrow.

Achebe describes how he could have written it:

I am sending you as my representative among those people -- just to be on the safe side in case the new religion develops. One has to move with the times or else one is left behind. I have a hunch that those who fail to come to terms with the white man may well regret their lack of foresight (Chinweizu, 1987, p. 310).

3. Commenting on Okri’s latest book, *Songs of Enchantment*, a reviewer described the work as "fundamentally discursive, rather than linear. . . the precise configuration of the main story remains elusive, primarily because the descriptive detours remain irresistible" (Globe and Mail, June 12, 1993, p.C11).

In the book, the mother of the spirit child, Azaro, criticizes the father’s story-telling:

"Your story isn’t going anywhere," mum said, in the dark.

"A story is not a car," dad replied. "It is a road, and before that it was a river, a river that never ends" (p. 266).

4. The conversation is between the narrator and Arkady, an Australian who is "mapping" the sacred sites of the aboriginals.

Most tribes, Arkady went on, spoke the language of their immediate neighbor, so the difficulties of communication across a frontier did not exist. The mystery was how a man of Tribe A, living up one end of a Songline, could hear a few bars sung by Tribe Q and, without knowing a word of Q’s language, would know exactly what land was being sung. . .

The chances were he’d recognise the melody at once -- just as we would the Moonlight Sonata -- but the meaning of the words would escape him. All the same, he’d listen very attentively to the melodic structure. . . it seems the melodic contour of the song describes the nature of the land over which the song passes. So if the Lizard Man were dragging his heels across the salt-pans of Lake Eyre, you could expect a succession of long flats, like Chopin’s Funeral March. If he were skipping up and down the MacDonnell escarpments, you’d have a series of arpeggios and glissandos, like Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsodies.

Certain phrases, certain combinations of musical notes, are thought to describe the action of the Ancestor’s feet. One phrase would say 'salt-pan', another 'creek-bed', 'sand-hill',
'rock-face' and so forth. An expert song-man, by listening to their order of succession, would count how many times his hero crossed a river, or scaled a ridge -- and be able to calculate where, and how far along, a Songline he was. . .

'So a musical phrase,' I said, 'is a map reference?'

'Music,' said Arkady, 'is a memory bank for finding one's way about the world' (Chatwin, 1987, pp. 107-108).
Map courtesy of Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University
"Mushrooms don't rot in a single day."

III. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN WINNEBA DISTRICT

Social and political structure

Winneba lies on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea, some forty miles west of the capital, Accra. The administrative headquarters for the Awutu-Effutu-Senya district in the Central Region, it is accessible by a paved road and transportation is good. The town (with a population of some 40,000 people) and the district around it are similar in many ways to the area in Papua New Guinea where Abrams (1984) made his inventory of traditional communication systems.1 Both have been strongly influenced by Western education and Christianity, and both traditional economies are based on fishing. Despite health facilities, the incidence of malnutrition and child mortality remains high.2

The town is similar in appearance to many others on the West African coast. Although the main roads are paved, they are lined with open gutters and with wooden stalls set up by vendors who sell oranges and bananas, groundnuts and fried plantain. The main market is near the beach, busy on mornings and evenings when the fishermen leave and return in long wooden pirogues powered by

1Abrams study, reported in Wang and Dissanayake (1984), provided the impetus for this current research in an African environment.

2Figures from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey for 1988 put the infant mortality rate in the Central Region at 13.8 per cent; that is, 13.8 per cent of infants born died in their first year of life. The figure for the Greater Accra region was 5.8 per cent.
outboard motors. There is a bank and a post office, which has one of the few working telephones in the town. Several small "chop" bars sell beer, soft drinks and snacks, and a cinema hall now shows videos. There is also a "beach resort" run by a local entrepreneur, often hired out by various ministries for conferences and patronized by visiting Europeans.

Smaller towns and villages in the area have many of the characteristics of Gyanyandze, a community of about 500 people five kilometres from Winneba on the Winneba-Senya road. Here the people are primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture, cultivating maize and cassava. Some keep goats, sheep and chickens, mainly for sale. There is no school or clinic, although at the time of field work a school was being built through communal labor. A pond provides water; when it dries up in the dry season, people walk the three kilometres to the Ayensu river. There is no post office. A profile of the village drawn up by a participatory research group from the University of Ghana in January, 1990, reported that only four of the 50 households had radio sets and that market women were the main sources of information from outside. The chief or the CDR member (the government's "grassroots" representative) had the gong-gong beater inform them of local events and activities.

The indigenous people of Winneba town are the Effutu, who migrated from the north during the 16th century. Although they still speak a dialect of the Guan language, they have adopted the language and many of the social institutions of their coastal
neighbors, the Fante, an Akan-speaking group. Traditionally, Effutu society was organized on the principle of double descent, meaning that both matrilineal and patrilineal descent are recognized. Each Effutu is a member of a matrilineage, and traces his/her descent from a common ancestress. Several such matrilineages make up the clan *Abusua* (Wyllie, 1980). There are five clans among the Effutu, each having a totemic symbol — *Anona*, the parrot, symbolizing eloquence; *Asona*, the crow, the most cunning bird; *Twidan*, the lion, symbol of royalty; *Aboradze*, the plantain which thrives and multiplies, and *Kona*, the brave bush cow. These totems often appear on the staffs carried by the chief’s linguist, the *okyeame*.

The Effutu chieftaincy alternates between two ruling families, the Gharteys and the Ayirebi-Acquahs. There has been a tradition of enmity between the families, with supporters of patrilineal succession lining up behind the Gharteys, and supporters of matrilineal succession behind the Ayirebi-Acquahs. Chiefs have been Christian for generations, and this affiliation has at times come into conflict with traditional duties. Some years ago, Nana Ghartey V, a Methodist, was destooled (removed) when he failed to perform a traditional rite during the people’s most important festival, *Aboakyer*. The chief is supported by a traditional council whose members sit on his right and left flank, according to traditional military custom. The council meets regularly to discuss matters of customary law, such as marriage, funerals, and land claims.
The paramount chief, the **Omanhene**, lives in the capital town of a traditional area, in this case, Winneba. He is the spiritual leader of his people as well as the administrative leader of his traditional area. He settles disputes among his people and ensures that traditional rites are performed and customary laws obeyed. He is also custodian of land and property. Divisional chiefs rule on his behalf in towns and villages in the area, assisted by a council of elders. These people -- clan, lineage and family heads -- are charged with looking after the interests of their people, and they make laws and try cases.

The person next in importance to the chief in the traditional hierarchy is the queen mother, who is influential in selecting a new chief. She attends all sessions of the council, and advises the chief and elders. Regarded as the "mother" of the Effutu state, she sits with the chief at durbars and ceremonial occasions.

Every chief also has a linguist, or spokesperson, an **okyeame**. At official functions, linguists are identified by their staffs, which usually carry a carved totem, painted in gold, at the top. The totem may depict historical events or may communicate a particular value or wisdom. For example, a hand holding an egg is interpreted: When you press it too hard it breaks, but if you do not hold it tightly enough it may fall from your hand and break on the ground. Therefore, chiefs must rule with care (*Cultural Studies*, 1989).

There are two asafo "companies" in Winneba town, **Tuafo** (No.
Every Effutu at birth becomes a member of his father’s company. Traditionally, the asafo were groups of young warriors, charged with protecting the town from external enemies and with ensuring the interests of the people against a chief who might exceed the limits of his power. They still carry considerable political and social influence, sing and drum at funerals and festivals, and have the power to disempower a chief. Asafo companies at one time could be found in all Akan-speaking areas of Ghana. Although their importance has decreased among the Ashanti, they still function along the coast, and their traditions are vigorously practised in Winneba district.

Hagan, who studied social change among the Effutu in the 60s and early 70s, wrote of the Winneba asafo:

Their role, besides maintaining internal order. . . and security from external attack, has included participation in ritual, ceremonial, political and social events in the society. Until this day, they have remained the most powerful organized force in the town, and they have maintained the esprit de corps of a fighting force (p. 242).

. . . Although government after government has looked upon the asafo as an outmoded and often dangerous institution, which should be stamped out, the ordinary people recognize the asafo as the only body which is capable of representing their interests in the town. Almost every issue which affects the individual and group interests of the people is channelled through the asafo. And the asafo have been vigorous in representing those interests (p. 273).

Turkson (1982) believes that among the Effutu, the asafo organization tends to embrace the whole society. "Every member is expected to participate in its deliberations. Loyalty to one’s asafo company is very strong and surmounts all other ties" (p. 14).

The Tuafo and Dentsifo are further divided into three main
divisions, each further divided into sub-sections. Each subsection has its own safohen or chief captain, and two or three subordinate captains elected by the members of the section. All these officers are controlled by the principal supi, the recognized head of the whole company. He is the company’s spokesman and representative in all matters. He summons the members to meet and is the person who settles disputes related to divorce, inheritance, or strained relations, assisted by his elders.

Although the defence of the society has now been taken over by the state, asafo members still exercise their political authority re chieftancy, as has been noted, and organize search parties when a member has been lost in the forest or drowned at sea. They also undertake communal labour in the community. Recently, when the paramount chief of one traditional area in the Central Region abolished looting, harrassment, and other such customs associated with the death of chiefs, the asafo companies were charged with enforcing the decision (Atti Mokwa, 1989). Two years ago, when the Ghana Water and Sewerage Corporation threatened to turn off the town’s water supply because the tank was so dirty, the asafo organized and implemented the cleaning.

The PNDC Regime

At the time of field work, the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), headed by Flight-Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, formed the national government. One of the PNDC’s most ambitious
programs since it came to power in a coup in 1979 has been the initiation of district assembly (DA) elections, held between December, 1988 and February, 1989. "The elections were seen by some observers as a practical demonstration and fulfillment of the PNDC's slogan of placing power in the hands of the people and giving them the opportunity for genuine participation in the government of the country" (Ayee, 1990). Critics, however, have described the DAs as "organs for taxation" and "usurpers".

Commenting on the criticism, Mr. Kwamena Ahwoi, PNDC Secretary for Local Government, said conflicts often arise when assembly members exercise authority in areas where traditional chiefs have been the acting authority for the past 20 years. Although many traditional functions of chiefs were removed from the Chieftancy Act and reassigned under the Local Government Act of 1971, the chiefs continued to perform those functions in the absence of any other effective local government. "Now that DAs are rightfully exercising these functions, some chiefs consider it as trampling upon their power" (T-Vieta, 1990).

During the period of field work in 1989-90, considerable media coverage was given to district and regional secretaries calling for closer co-operation and mutual support between assembly members and chiefs and elders. Traditional leaders were reminded that they had been consulted on the appointment of assembly members (one third of each district assembly is appointed, two thirds elected), and that every assembly in the country has representation from traditional councils. However,
conflicts inevitably occurred. In one case in the Volta Region, five persons, including a sub-chief, were charged with assaulting an assembly member after he launched a campaign to pen stray animals. The member had disregarded a letter from the chief advising him to keep the anti-stray animals committee out of his section of the town ("Five arraigned," 1989).

Other reported incidents included a case in Ashanti where district secretaries and administrative officers could neither speak nor understand the local language, and a case in the Eastern Region where assembly members had been accused of not meeting regularly with the townspeople. They claimed they had been unable to secure the services of a gong-gong beater to summon people to meetings and that the provision of such a service was the responsibility of the traditional council.

The PNDC representative in Winneba is also the district secretary for Awutu-Effutu-Senya (Awutu and Senya are neighboring towns), and his is a political appointment. He presides over meetings of the district assembly in Winneba. The assembly members are assisted in their role of promoting community development by elected members of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs). Established during the economic crisis in the early '80s, the CDR "cadres" were in charge of the allocation of essential commodities, such as cement and flour. They remain the "district level revolutionary authority" (Ephson, 1988), and help to promote development programs, such as literacy drives and immunization campaigns. They have also worked with
local assemblymen to construct a concrete water tank for the Winneba hospital, procured street lights to illuminate the hospital road, and overseen road maintenance and rehabilitation.

Other "revolutionary organs" include members of the June 4 Movement (named after the day of the first Rawlings coup), the Mobisquads (primarily young people in their late teens and early twenties), the Town Development Committee, and members of the December 31st Women's Movement. Actively promoted by Rawlings' wife, the movement in Winneba includes market women and traders, fishmongers, farmers, hairdressers and seamstresses, teachers, and women employed by various government departments. They are involved in various income-generating projects, including a sugar cane enterprise that supports a local day-care centre. According to the district organiser, Mrs. Agnes Awotwe-Pratt (who is also the daughter of a former paramount chief, Nana Ayiribi-Acquah III, and an assembly member) the most pressing problems affecting women in the district are related to health and economic activities. The situation regarding health care will be discussed in another chapter. As for economic activities, the women are involved in farming, gari-processing, and soap-making. However, they have no access to credit facilities, and they often ask Mrs. Pratt to help them repay loans. The current queen mother, a divisional chief, is patroness to the organization, and provided the women with milling machines to process maize and cassava, but the machines had no motors. At the time of our conversation, the women had asked the district council to provide motors but had
received no reply. This lack of response was attributed to the fact that most of the people on the council were men, and "when we talk, they don’t take us serious." Only 6.5 per cent of assembly members in the country are women ("Assembly of men", 1989).

In May of 1992, the 10-year ban on political parties imposed by the PNDC was lifted. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held the following November and December, and Rawlings was elected with approximately 58 per cent of the vote. However, opposing parties contested the results, and the Fourth Republic, inaugurated in January, 1993, got off to a rocky start.

Educational and religious organization

Most primary and secondary schools in Winneba are supported by the Christian churches, and there are several post-secondary government-run institutions, including the Advanced Teacher Training College (ATTC), Specialist Training College, and the National Academy of Music. (In the ‘60s, when Winneba’s importance as a port was overshadowed by new ports developed at Tema and Takoradi, the head of state, Kwame Nkrumah, tried to make up for the loss by promoting Winneba as an educational centre. The ATTC, formerly the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, was built to train party activists).

Although virtually every Christian church (Methodist, Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian, Zion) has an affiliated school, conversations with teachers revealed that attendance is often
sporadic, particularly among the children of "fisherfolk". It is not uncommon to see children of school age playing or swimming at the beach, selling foodstuffs from kiosks, or looking after younger siblings during the day. It may be that for many families in Winneba, the situation has not changed much from an earlier period described by the Ghanaian novelist Francis Selormey:

In those days, children did not start school at any particular age. They came when they could be spared from the farm or from fishing; or when a good harvest or a good fishing season provided money for their fees and books; or when the head of their family became convinced that schooling was a good thing; or when the child himself was old enough to beg his parents to send him. . . (1966, p. 40).

The influence of the British education model on schooling is evident. Students wearing uniforms line up and march in for morning inspection, often singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" as they go. They sit in rows in the classroom and must raise their arm for permission to speak. Changes are being made, however, in line with the government's cultural policy of Sankofa, which encourages an understanding and incorporation of traditional values into all aspects of Ghanaian life.³ To this end, the practice of ringing bells for assembly has been replaced with drumming the atumpan, and annual cultural competitions among schools at the district and regional levels have been revived. At the competition observed in Winneba, choral groups in uniforms singing hymns and gospel songs were followed by young girls in

³Although Sankofa translates literally as "return and fetch it," the official statement on cultural policy points out that the term "does not imply a blind return to customs and traditions of the past."
traditional cloth and adornments reciting praise poetry, and by young boys drumming. Students also performed plays based on events from local history, and one group enacted puberty rites.

Christian mission activity has been recorded along the coast since the latter part of the 15th century, although large-scale conversions did not occur until the 19th (Wyllie, 1980). With the gradual expansion of British colonialism, the two major missions, Basel and Methodist, claimed substantial progress. They were followed by Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian proselytizers. In Winneba today, all these churches draw a large part of their congregations from the educated and professional class, while the illiterate "fisherfolk" (particularly wives and daughters) tend to favor the spiritualist churches, which have proliferated over the past few years. These churches are part of new religious movements that have arisen in several West African countries in recent decades. They usually incorporate traditional religious elements such as divination, exorcism, visions and trances.

These movements take a pragmatic approach and appear more directly concerned with the existential problems of their members than the older, more established churches.

These problems include anxiety about the future and one's lot in the here-and-now. Thus, people experiencing distress of any kind -- unemployment, petty jealousies, sickness, financial or family difficulties or fear of both physical and spiritual enemies like witchcraft and sorcery -- flock into these movements in search of allegedly sure and usually immediate solutions to these problems, for the movements are known to be able to handle all these problems in ways that members consider meaningful in their lives (Mbon, 1986, p. 188).
Many of the movements listed by Wyllie in 1980 are still active in the town -- Musama Disco Christo Church, St. Anthony Healing Power Church, Church of the Lord Aladura, Twelve Apostles, African Faith Tabernacle. An interview with the senior medical officer for Winneba district confirmed that many of his patients first consult "the reverend" before they come to see him.⁴ Women particularly will often go to a faith healer or prophet before they seek medical help. The implications of this relationship will be examined in chapter 5.

It is in the area of health and well-being and in the rites of passage relating to birth and death that the weaving of traditional and "modern" practices is most apparent in Winneba. A family may perform a naming ceremony on the eighth day after birth, assuring its place in the lineage, and follow it with a Christian baptism.⁵ At one of the funerals observed, the deceased was a herbalist with no Christian connections. But because some of his children belonged to the Zion church, he had a Christian burial. Because he was also a prominent member of an asafo company, his mates turned out to drum their own eulogies.

Such accommodating behavior among Ghanaians has been noted by Ilogu (1979), who describes a burial procession headed by a choir and a priest wending its way to the cemetery, to be

⁴Interview with Dr. Kwame Opare-Twum, March 22, 1990.

⁵Before the eighth day, the child is not given any social recognition, in case it should die. If it dies before the eighth day, it is considered a visitor, and will not be mourned as part of the family.
followed later at night by a very different procession, carrying live coals to the seashore for a ceremonial bath to chase away evil spirits. The sacrifice of a sheep may be followed by a wakekeeping, where mourners sit up all night singing Christian hymns, and in the morning pour libations to the ancestors.

On occasion, however, such important rituals are cause for family disputes. One case reported in Winneba involved a dead man's wife and daughter, who wanted him buried according to Christian rites, in opposition to the wishes of his extended family. The burial was held up for some two months, and the case eventually went to court for resolution.

**Mass media and information services**

In general, the media in Ghana are characterised by the same tight government control and high degree of centralisation common to many African countries. After each change of government since the coup that deposed Nkrumah in 1966, editors and journalists have been fired and replaced by those more sympathetic to the new regime. Independent as well as party publications have been affected, and stories of editors being detained and interrogated are legion. Currently, the Castle Information Bureau overrides the Ministry of Information, which has nominal authority over the media, and vets all sensitive issues in advance of publication. Reprisal from the Castle is swift if the government is seen to be presented in an unfavorable light (Gyan-Apenteng, 1991, 1992).

About 85 per cent of all newspapers, magazines and journals
originate in the national capital, Accra, and the remainder come out of Kumasi, the second major city in the country, with an occasional publication from another regional capital, such as Cape Coast or Takoradi. The principal newspapers, the People's Daily Graphic (with a circulation of 130,000 in 1985) and the Ghanaian Times (circulation of 100,000) and their respective weekly counterparts, The Mirror and Weekly Spectator are published in and circulate from Accra (Boafo, 1988). They carry much of the same news and information from the same sources and generally reflect the interests and tastes of an urban audience. A content analysis of news, editorials and features in the Times and Graphic by Twumasi (1985) showed both papers gave significantly more space (86.3%) to coverage of urban social classes -- politicians, administrators, and military and professional elites.

Sporadic efforts have been made to extend media resources to the regions. In the 1970s, the School of Communication Studies at the University of Ghana published The Densu Times and The Akora New Era, both in English, for middle school children in selected communities in the Eastern and Central regions. In 1990, a monthly newspaper, Wonsuom, was the only newspaper in the vernacular that served Winneba district. Begun in the early '80s as part of a UNESCO effort to improve the communication infrastructure in rural areas of the country, it is also administered by faculty and staff in the School of Communication Studies. Reporters and correspondents have been trained in news-
gathering techniques, and the paper publishes timely information on agriculture, health, entertainment, and cultural events. Although surveys have shown it is popular among readers, its status in recent years has been uncertain, as Unesco funding has ended and newsprint is in short supply (Obeng-Quaidoo, 1988).

The holdings of the small local library and the college libraries in Winneba are virtually all in English (with the exception of some children’s books), and printed materials generally are in short supply. The only print medium seen at Muniano, an Ewe fishing community that stretches along the beach in Winneba, was a blackboard with a chalked message announcing the showing of a Rambo video.

Radio production and transmitting facilities are centralized in Accra, with the 52 stations outside the capital performing mainly a relay function (Boafo, 1988). Thus the capacity of these stations to generate and broadcast programs of local relevance and interest is limited. GBC 1, which broadcasts in six Ghanaian languages, is on the air fourteen hours a day and is heavily news- and music-oriented, although there are programs targeted to women and children and to farmers. GBC 2, the commercial service in English, concentrates on news and current affairs and includes lessons in English and French. Radio is a popular medium, and the GBC’s efforts to communicate in the vernacular are impressive, but there are limitations, as expressed in this letter from a listener:

Our main problem is the poor reception from the GBC radio boxes, most of which are white elephants in the villages. The
costs of transistor radios and dry-cell batteries are also astronomical (Antwi-Tannoh, 1989).

Because the rediffusion boxes are old and unreliable, GBC is currently introducing an FM service. One of the first has been established at Apam, about 20 miles from Winneba, and some programs on health, nutrition, and community development are locally-produced. The new service would seem to hold the most potential for locally-relevant programming, the lack of which has been recognized by Mrs. Maud Blankson-Mills, head of audience research for GBC:

Most program producers have attended secondary institutions in urban areas, and end up at Broadcast House in Accra, where most programs originate. They probably visit their villages during festivals or funerals, or never visit. Unfortunately, some of them tend to hold an erroneous view that they have sufficient knowledge of the audience. They therefore take decisions based on common sense, guess work, or at best imprecise assumptions. Costly mistakes are sometimes made when programs are designed and produced in isolation from broader social, economic and cultural realities, and tend to be irrelevant to the needs of program users (Ekuban, 1989).

Television is available in Winneba to those who have access to sets, although there is no community viewing venue. Programming runs from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. weekdays; more on weekends. It features a variety of news, sports, children's programs, drama and documentaries. One half hour every evening is devoted to adult education in a Ghanaian language — Twi, Ewe, Ga, Nzema, Dagbani or Hausa — and there is often another hour of local drama. The remainder of the programming is in English. Lately, video has become popular, and the town cinema has been turned into a video parlour, featuring mainly horror shows in the "Poltergeist" genre. The media have directed considerable
attention to the proliferation of such video parlours, and some
district assemblies have banned teenagers under 18 from
attending the shows unless they have been approved by the
Ministry of Information or the Ghana Education Service. Parents
of defaulting teenagers are liable to fines or imprisonment, and
the young people themselves could receive six to twelve lashes

The first part of this chapter has provided an overview of
the social, political, educational and religious institutions in
Winneba, and of the mass media infrastructure. It can be seen
that at all levels, strands of the "old mat" remain, and new
threads have been woven in. Educated people, such as teachers or
clerical workers, may wear Western clothes and go to offices
where they speak English all day. On weekends, the same people
may be found, dressed in traditional cloth, at naming ceremonies
or funerals, where libations to the ancestors are poured and
ancestral spirits are called upon for consultation and advice.6
Although the district assembly meets to discuss and legislate on
municipal matters, the traditional council still determines and
updates customary law. A fisherman who drowns at sea may have a
Christian burial, but his mates will carry his cloth to a fetish

6It is common at a naming ceremony, for instance, to hear the
response "obegyina" ("come to stay") when gifts are announced. The
ancestral spirits are asked to let the child live out a normal life
span. Children are often given Christian names as well as a name
that signifies the day they were born, and their place in the
family, e.g. third male.
priest to determine why this has happened. Newspapers and radio inform and entertain, while family heads retain their influence in family decision-making and in settling family disputes.

The remainder of the chapter will examine the methodology used in the research, and the limitations of the chosen approach.

Methodological considerations in cross-country fieldwork.

The primary methodology chosen for the field work for this study was participant observation. The method is particularly appropriate for studies where little is known about a phenomenon, where there are important differences between the views of insiders as opposed to outsiders, and when the phenomenon is somehow obscured from the view of outsiders. "The world of everyday life is for the methodology of participant observation the ordinary, usual, typical, routine, or natural environment of human existence" (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 15).

The case studied may be a culture, society, community, subculture, organization, group, or phenomenon such as beliefs, practices, or interactions as well as almost any other aspect of human existence. Data are gathered through casual conversations, in-depth, informal, and unstructured interviews as well as formally structured interviews and questionnaires.

As a participant, the researcher must sustain access once it has been granted, and maintain relationships with people in the field. The relationship between the participant as observer,  

people in the field setting, and the larger context of human interaction is one of the key components of this methodology.

Ghanaian researchers and "outsiders" doing research in Ghana have often chosen participant observation. Obeng-Quaidoo (1985) advised researchers in Africa to concern themselves with the preoccupations of rural people, to examine their music and folklore in order to better understand their world view.

... in future, we shall not arm ourselves with prepared questionnaires for the villages. Rather, we shall live in the villages as participant observers, partake in the activities of the shrines, talk to juju men, attend the spiritual churches, the established Christian churches, before we engage villagers in free open-ended discussions of their surroundings. Such an approach will help us find the intuitive communicative behavior of the African (p. 117).

Wolf Bleek, a Dutch anthropologist who has chosen the participant observation approach for research over many years in Ghana, points out that few foreigners in the field truly participate in the lives of their informants. Their relatively privileged backgrounds and favorable prospects "are hardly compatible with the equality that is necessary for sharing the life of poor people" (Bleek, 1979, p. 201). Particularly in traditional societies where egalitarianism is the rule, field workers place themselves outside the community by maintaining any semblance of Western standards of living.

Twumasi (1986) advises people entering the field that they must introduce themselves properly to the local authorities, to the chief of the area, to the prominent people, to informal leaders and to members of the local development committee, so as to gain a legitimate entry into the community.
Introduction to the community

My own entree to Winneba was considerably facilitated by a letter of introduction from Prof. Robert Wyllie at Simon Fraser to one of his former research assistants. A native of the town and the headmaster of a secondary school, the man seemed to embody many of the contradictions inherent in cultural continuity and change. A Christian heavily involved in church activities, he was also polygamous, having married a second, younger wife by customary rite. His children were given traditional, not Christian, names. His duties as schoolmaster consumed much of his time, and he was also sought out by various family members to settle disputes and help sort out problems (e.g. chasing down the management of a hire-purchase firm who had left town after an illiterate nephew had invested a sum of money to buy a boat).

As a result of his busy schedule, I had somewhat limited access to him, but he was instrumental in introducing me to people in the community, including members of performance groups and the December 31st Women’s Movement. He arranged for me to accompany him to several funerals where these groups performed and acted as interpreter on many occasions. Although an "enlightened" man, as he more than once brought to my attention, he seemed to be very much in touch with his people’s customs and traditions and was concerned that I understood them properly.

The second person in Winneba who proved to be a useful informant and facilitator was the cultural officer for the district. I met him during my first week in the town at a seminar
district. I met him during my first week in the town at a seminar and workshop session organized by the Centre for National Culture in the Central Region. The centres are administrative structures set up throughout the country to oversee the development and implementation of a new national policy on culture. I was attracted to the session through a newspaper advertisement, and was subsequently impressed with the commitment of the participants to encouraging and promoting traditional art and communication forms, and to finding ways of using those resources to benefit local people. To quote the keynote speaker, the deputy secretary for education: "Until our culture becomes the basis of all our policies -- educational, social, political or economic -- the attainment of the objectives of self-reliance, the reshaping of our national identity and the restoration of our self image will continue to elude us."

The cultural officer for Winneba district was working to raise the centre's profile in the community, to improve relationships with local artists and performers, and to set up a documentation centre where information on musical instruments, songs, dance forms and performers would be available. Although a busy man, he took time to discuss his work (and the problems involved) with me, and to introduce me to local performers and to the regional administration at Cape Coast.

These two people were involved in my research throughout my stay in Winneba, as guides, interpreters, and informants, and I am aware that my considerable dependence on them has to some
extent influenced the acquisition and analysis of the material presented here. As Berreman (1962) has pointed out, the characteristics of an interpreter/assistant are of crucial importance to any research effort. They are the people who are familiar to and acknowledged by the local community, and it is through them that an outsider derives her impressions of that community.

My own position as a single woman and mature student no doubt also influenced my reception and ultimately, my insights based on that reception. I do, however, tend to agree with Gartrell (1979) that in many African societies, it may be that "the femaleness of a female investigator is not in itself as important as her relation to any men associated with her" (p. 437). Gartrell found her own reception in Tanzania was mediated by the presence of her husband, who was known and respected by the local people, and by her interpreter, a man involved in community development and seen as one of the "young modernizers." In my own case, I was often assured by my facilitators that my presence at a particular function would be acceptable as long as I was with him.

My accommodation in a private home on the compound of the Advanced Teacher Training College allowed me to observe the interaction in an educated family. In this case the family included a widowed man who was a teacher at the college, his young son, second wife, and a student boarder. As the headmaster had arranged for his (junior) wife to cook for me, I took most of
my meals alone in my room and did not really feel a part of the household. However, living there gave me a chance to observe a "non-traditional" singing group that gathered once a week at the house to practise hymns for church. It also provided me with an entree to the National Academy of Music, as the other boarder was a student there. I was able to go with him to performance sessions and recitals where the students, who were from various ethnic groups in Ghana, learned traditional dancing and drumming as well as Western music and instruments.

The house was in close proximity to the health team's offices and to the baby clinic, and I often dropped in there on my way to and from town. It was also close to the cultural centre, where I became a regular visitor. In the evenings, I often joined the headmaster and his wife at the wife's kiosk for conversation.

An affluent foreigner

Although I was conscious of my student status throughout my stay in Winneba and was always looking for ways to economise on a limited budget (I ate local food, travelled on public transportation, etc.), I was aware that others saw me as a more affluent foreigner. I agree with Bleek that efforts at "equalization" remain well-intentioned efforts, difficult to carry out. Compared to the other student in the house, I was obviously much better off -- I had a camera and a tape recorder and a digital alarm clock, and I could afford the bus fare to
Accra as often as I pleased. The 10-year-old son of the house regularly went through my garbage to salvage an empty toothpaste tube or used batteries, and he used the polythene bags I threw out to carry his books to school.

In the town, I was often made aware by individuals and by groups that information and co-operation was worth a monetary reward. The *adziwa* group was particularly suspicious that I might record their material for my own profit; they spent considerable time discussing the number of bottles of *akpeteshie* (local gin) it would be appropriate for me to provide. (In the end, I provided money for drinks and more money for subsequent information).

"The vision of the stranger will never become perfect."

The importance of introductions and my dependence on other people to make them for me was also very time-consuming. My field notes reveal an initial request made to the cultural officer to meet an *adziwa* group on November 2; on November 9 I was introduced to a district assemblyman who had recorded some of their music and whose mother was a member of a group. On November 10 I was taken to her house, where I met her and several other women. Eventually twelve women turned up to sing and we had a recording session. However, when I went through the songs with the headmaster (the cultural officer not being immediately available) many of them were difficult for me to interpret, and the headmaster agreed to arrange another meeting. This proved
difficult; the women were smoking fish and said they had no time. Finally, on November 27, another meeting was arranged and the song texts clarified.

I later learned the women were reluctant to meet with the headmaster as he had not been part of the original "negotiating team." He told me they were also concerned because I had provided compensation only once and now was asking for additional information. In order to maintain good relations, the additional money was provided.

The biggest obstacle to my participation in local events and activities was my inability to communicate adequately in the local language. Although I had previously spent several years living in West Africa (in Ghana and Nigeria), this time was spent largely on university campuses, where the language barrier was easily breached. In Winneba, I was constantly aware of my deficiency in the language, as English-language speakers would often shift into Fante, and most of the "fisherfolk" spoke no English at all. During an interview with family heads, for example, the headmaster was unexpectedly called away, and I was left smiling and drinking beer with two elderly gentlemen. As they were free only on Tuesdays, the day they don't go fishing, the interview was postponed for a week (which in turn was postponed for another week, as they had to inspect a new boat being built the following Tuesday).

Although this kind of participatory approach to research can provide the insights and telling details not usually revealed
through more quantitative methods, it is a slow and often frustrating process. In contrast, a survey carried out on behalf of a professor at Simon Fraser to collect information on students’ knowledge of AIDS was done relatively quickly and easily. Once I received the questions, it took only a morning’s visit to two secondary schools to get the permission of the headmasters to carry out the survey. The woman who cooked for me (who was also a secretary) typed the stencils, and they were run off at the Specialist Teachers College (after a trip to Accra to buy the paper). The original date set was postponed by a week, as many students had not returned from Christmas vacation. Fees were due then, and students do not return until they are able to pay them. However, on the new date set all went according to plan, and the field work part of the study was completed within three weeks.

The extended time period necessary for participant observation did allow me to attend several funerals, cultural competitions at the schools, Akwanbo festivals, the New Year’s masquerade and the March 1 Independence Day celebrations. The biggest festival, Aboakyer, which I thought would take place in April before I left, is now always held in May. Because of the proximity of Winneba to Accra and the University of Ghana, I was able to spend a few days there every month and discuss my progress with faculty members of the School of Communication Studies. I was also able to use the resources of the library and to meet and talk with members of the Institute of African Studies.
and the School of Performing Arts there.

When the research period was over, I was acutely aware of having only skimmed the surface of some aspects of my research topic. Although I had read widely in the area, had previous personal experience of the culture, and some guidance in the field from Ghanaian academics at the University of Ghana, I experienced anxiety much of the time, wondering whether or not I was getting the material I really needed. As Salzman (1986) has pointed out, ethnography is conceived as a personal act on the part of the student researcher, and this "personal quest" is reinforced by funding patterns. He recommends a strategy for social and cultural anthropology based more on the "team-research" model rather than the "lone adventurer" model. Such a team approach would bring specialists together at a common site over a number of years (as in archeological research), and a more complete picture could result. The mutual consultation and stimulation among team members would provide the kind of cross-checking that is often not possible for the person working alone.

The team approach would seem to be particularly valuable for researchers working in another culture. Indigenous team members would often be able to answer questions and clarify issues as they emerge, and their familiarity with the local language and customs would be an asset. In my own case, an attachment to a research team might have meant concentrating in more depth on a smaller area of inquiry (e.g. proverbs) that could have been
supplemented and put into context by the findings of other members of the team.

Despite these shortcomings, I feel I have begun to explore some of the forms and settings of traditional communication in Winneba and have determined their potential and adaptability for health education in Ghana. The field work also has quite clearly revealed the problems and limitations involved in implementation. The research presented here forms the basis of an inventory that I hope will be expanded in years to come. As Abrams (1984) concluded from his work in Papua New Guinea, there is a rich field of research to be pursued in identifying indigenous communication forms and integrating them into development activity.

The following chapter examines the threads of indigenous communication forms that are still popular and in use in Winneba and environs.
"It sounds like the weaver bird singing."

IV. COMMUNICATION THROUGH PERFORMANCE AND RITUAL IN WINNEBA

The field work undertaken in this study attempted to determine what forms of indigenous communication are still in current use in Winneba and district and what potential they hold as adaptable media for development messages, particularly health education messages. If culture is the context of communication, then close attention to these cultural forms may yield clues to guide message designers. Ugboajah (1985) and Sonaike (1987) have both stressed the need to catalogue the essential features of such traditional communication systems and to detail their origins and purposes, mode and format.

The definition of performance as used in the title of this chapter is that of Victor Turner, also used by Stern and Henderson (1993). Turner views performance as an essential aspect of experience, recalling the etymology of the word from the French parfournir which means "to complete" or "to carry out thoroughly." A performance completes social processes and invests them with meaning. Turner argues that cultures forge meaning and communicate through performance.

Performances are symbolic constructs that manifest themselves in a diverse range of behaviors, including rituals, trials, cockfights, wars and a whole host of activities that are performed frequently in the social life of a culture (Stern and Henderson, p. 10).

Ceremonial performances are designed to feature public display and exhibition, and they often involve an audience to the
extent that the boundaries between performers and audience are blurred. They occur in designated places, such as the courtyard of a particular family where a funeral or naming ceremony is going on, and they may last several hours or several days. Delineating the differences in function between ceremonial performances and theatrical performances, Stern and Henderson draw attention to the heightened aesthetic qualities of the former, noting that they may involve decoration, adornment, display and beauty and that these properties

. . . are put at the service of the culture, and the ceremony is designed principally to reinforce cultural values and to solidify social organization or stimulate political action, rather than principally to please and entertain. The relationship between the performers in the collective performances is one that blurs the boundaries between privileged performers and participant performers and involves the collectivity as a whole. . . (p. 26).

The communication forms documented here include two traditional performance groups, asafo and adziwa, composed of drummers, singers and dancers indigenous to many towns and villages along the coast. Puberty rites, that communicate a young woman's "ripeness" -- her readiness to enter the adult community -- are also included, as are seasonal festivals that celebrate tradition and at the same time promote development activities. Finally, proverbs, a form of discourse that enhances speech and gives it flavor, are examined.

Asafo -- traditional warriors

As was noted in the previous chapter, the male groups of singers and drummers found among the Fante and Effutu along the
coast were traditionally "companies" of young warriors, called asafo. They retain considerable social and political influence in Winneba and are the force behind the biggest and most important annual festival, Aboakyer. They perform regularly at funerals, occasions of significant ritual. Their song texts refer to wars and brave deeds from the past, and "praise songs" celebrate the bravery of war captains and the good deeds of individuals. At the same time, those who have shown bad judgement may be insulted.

The asafo companies are colorful groups, each possessing distinguishing uniforms, headgear, flags and emblems. Distinctions are made between different grades of musicians on the basis of skill, knowledge of repertoire and leadership ability. As Turkson (1982) has pointed out, the two most important musicians are the cantor and the drummer. The cantor must have a clear, pleasant voice, must be able to remember the verses of songs, and must be able to compose texts extemporaneously. His ability to improvise and ridicule is especially prized, and may account for the close attention people pay to him at funeral performances. During observations of several of these performances, I was struck by how long people would stand and listen, despite the heat and lack of shade. Each song was sung three times to constant drumming, and often women would begin to dance. From time to time, a member of the audience (some found a seat on wooden benches under a canopy made from flour bags) would enter the circle and reward a dancer with money. Many of the songs and dances were described as "teasing,"
designed to mock, provoke, or annoy an "enemy," particularly from the other company. My interpreter pointed out that although most people knew the songs, as they came from a standard repertoire, they would listen carefully for any variations or deviations from the standard. When I wondered aloud whether people might become bored listening to the same songs, I was met with the response: "I eat fufu every day; I don't get bored with it." Fufu is a staple of the local diet made from pounded yam or cassava, and it can be prepared in a many ways, with a variety of fish and spicy sauce.

The following asafo songs were explained to me by two members of the No. 1 company in Winneba.¹ It was pointed out that although the songs may be very entertaining, they are also "fables." The first, translated as: "A bird dislikes faeces, but eats maggots" tells the story of a fisherman who drowns at sea, and whose body is claimed by No. 1 company, Tuafo. When the family rewards them for their effort, No. 2, Dentsifo, who refused to help, comes to claim a share. The moral of the story is that there are those who don't want to take part in what may be onerous or unpleasant (i.e. eat the faeces) but want to enjoy the benefits.

A second song fell into the category of "songs to reform a wrong-doer." These are often done "in a joking manner," one company pointing out the shortcomings of another. However, an

¹Interview with Kwame Kyer (cantor) and Kojo Tawiah, February 24, 1990.
individual can be singled out. The cantor recalled an incident where the safohen (captain) was succeeded by his nephew upon his death. The nephew did not perform his duties well, and the company composed a song pointing out that he was "from the same root" and should therefore be showing the leadership qualities of his predecessor and living up to expectations. As a result, the person began to take his leadership responsibilities more seriously.

A third song refers to an asafo ancestress, Yaa Buedum, a strong personality. "When you mention her, you are at the point where you need strong people," one informant said. "People need to put in extra effort. This song gives inspiration to put in more effort." A related one calls on a chief to bring new spirit to the people -- "the town is sinking, bestir yourself."

All the songs reflect circumstances where perseverance, determination and stamina are required.

Adziwa

In most coastal towns the asafo company has a women's section, often called adziwa or adenkum. The name comes from the songs sung and the kind of instruments used, usually rattles and gourds. During Aboakyer, the annual deer hunt festival when the men from both asafo companies compete to bring back a live deer, the women sing their praises and offer moral support. They also perform at funerals, "outdoorings" (where a newborn child is brought outside for the first time), and during puberty rites.
Each group has a characteristic dance (Datta, 1971). Dances that are well done are rewarded with gifts of money from the audience.

The songs that follow were recorded during a session with 14 adziwa singers, from No. 1 and No. 2 companies. The setting was Aba Sama's house, where the gourds, bells, and other musical instruments the women use in performance were kept. They began the session by pouring libation (from one of several bottles of akpeteshie, a local alcoholic drink, that I had been requested to bring), and invoking the spirit of the ancestors of the house to support the occasion. An oburoni (foreigner) had come to that particular house to learn from them, and they would share what they knew, what had been passed down to them through the generations. They divided the songs into two categories -- songs that reform a wrong-doer and songs that educate, particularly regarding marriage.

Several songs in the first category stressed that "what you are doing, everybody knows -- eyes have seen and ears have heard." You are always in the public eye. Bad behavior may not be publicly acknowledged, but it is known. One song, Ama verenko, taunts Ama (the name of any female born on Saturday), pointing fingers at her and calling her names, even though she may not know what she has done. Since you are always subjected to close public scrutiny, it is in your best interest to deport yourself

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2Aba Sama is the mother of George Odunsu Sam, a district assembly member who arranged the session and explained to the women my purpose in being there. Mr. Ernest Awuley from the Centre for National Culture in Winneba also attended. The session was held November 9, 1989.
In the second category, one song expressed the regret of a young woman who married against her mother’s advice and was later maltreated by her husband. The moral: "Give ear to the advice of those senior to you." A related song refers to a plant not able to grow in woody or rocky soil, but if the soil is good, it will flourish. The song is a metaphor for marriage -- if it is not going well, it may be because it is built on "sandy soil," because the background of the family has not been investigated and found to be sound. Another song warns against marrying a man who already has a wife. If any conflict arises, the man will side with the senior wife against the younger one. Yet another -- "Why do you sit for your children to cry?" -- warns young people against becoming parents before they are ready. They need to be mature and prepared to take on the responsibilities of parenthood. The ability to produce children is not enough -- you must be able to feed them when they are hungry and care for them when they are sick.

Three other songs sung that day were very long and highly metaphorical. One related the story of a quarrel between adenkum groups, the message in the end stressing that subordinates should give respect to their elders; another told of two women and a broken promise, which resulted in the river god capturing their children. The message: always keep your word. A third song told of an asafo member who intervened in a dispute in order to settle it but was beaten for his intervention. Thus when you set out to
do something that needs to be done, you must be prepared to suffer for it.³

Nde

Puberty rites, known as nde in Effutu and ndako in Fante, vary from region to region but have similar goals -- ushering a child into adulthood, physically, socially, and spiritually. The ritual surrounding the rite of passage is intended to enable the young man or woman "to behave and participate effectively as a useful member of society" (Amponsah, 1977, p. 65).

According to Stern and Henderson (1993), ritual behavior is marked by repetitive social action that marks periods of transition, when an individual moves from one socially designated position of status to another, transforming himself or herself into a different person in the process. Ritual has a "capacity to negotiate a place for itself, even when some of its symbols and belief systems seem threatened" (p. 140). Ritual can provide a way of understanding that is compatible with indigenous belief systems (as in the treatments given by herbalists and healers).

³I later played this song to a Fante-speaker in Halifax to check the translation. As an illustration, he recalled how he had intervened in a fight between two children at his son's school, while others stood by and watched. He felt it was his responsibility -- "in Ghana, parenthood is shared." Shortly afterwards, he found insults written in the dust on his car, and the car scratched. For him, the incident confirmed the song's message.
The textbook for cultural studies currently used in secondary schools in Ghana (published in 1989) lists the functions puberty rites fulfil:

* They teach the young girl to be obedient to her parents and prevent her from becoming pregnant before the initiation ceremony.
* They enable a girl to acquire some capital for her future, since she receives gifts of money from parents, relatives, and friends.
* They help the girl to learn some of her traditions, namely dressing, drumming, and dancing.
* The girl acquires knowledge about "good womanhood."
* A girl who is able to undergo the initiation brings honour to herself, her parents, and her family.

However, in the past few years the performance of puberty rites has declined across the country, and Winneba has been no exception. This decline is due primarily to the rising costs of rites, but also to urbanization, the spread of formal education, and Christianity. A week's ceremony, including gifts to the young woman, food and drink for friends and relatives, can easily run to C50,000 (approx $150 U.S.) and often costs as much as C200,000. Given that a teacher's monthly salary is about C20,000 ($60 U.S.) the cost is exorbitant.

During the time of field work, considerable media attention was given to the increasing number of teen-age pregnancies in the country, and a decline in the performance of puberty rites was
often associated with this rise. Speaking to a PTA group in Accra, Dr. Charlotte Gardiner, head of the Ministry of Health's maternal and child health unit, urged the groups to come up with a strategy to protect adolescents from the dangers of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. She said an increasing level of sexual activity among young people under 20 was causing concern among health professionals, and she attributed the early child-bearing to a decline in the popularity of the traditional form of sex education. Young people are thus "left at the mercy of their bodies' harmonies and their natural urge to try things out" (A genuine concern, 1989). An editorial in the same issue of the Graphic called the problem a "social canker" that could be traced to the breakdown of tradition and to parental irresponsibility. Launching a "motherhood campaign" in Ashanti, the district medical officer stressed the need for puberty rites to be used in "a more dynamic and transformed way acceptable to the present generation," ("Use puberty," 1989) as a means of checking teenage pregnancies.

The PNDC deputy regional secretary for the Central Region, Mr. J.E. Ekuban, cited "teenage motherhood" as the second most serious problem in rural districts in the region (after rapid population growth). Traditionally, however, sexuality has not been discussed between parents and children in the home, and family life programs are only beginning to be included in school

Address to a workshop for trainers for functional literacy programs, Specialist Teacher Training College, Winneba, September 28, 1989.
curricula. A conversation with Ms. Helena Obeng of the region’s Department of Community Development revealed that there were no sex education programs in the 11 girls’ vocational schools in that district, where young women aged 14 to 25 learn skills such as hairdressing and dressmaking. She estimated the drop-out rate at these schools at 45 per cent, "most because of pregnancy."\(^5\)

The senior medical officer in Winneba, Dr. Kwame Opare-Twum, confirmed that teen-age pregnancies were on the increase, although "many try to hide it."\(^6\) They seek out abortions at private clinics, which generally cost 6,000 to 10,000 cedis. Thus an abortion to terminate an unwanted pregnancy is considerably cheaper than the traditional form of sex education which aimed to prevent it.

No puberty rites were observed in Winneba, as field work had ended by the time they usually take place, a few weeks before Aboakyer. At that time, the chief or a member of his council will beat the gong gong to inform families with girls "of age" (those who have reached menses) that it is time to begin. On a given evening, the assembled young women will walk three times around the shrine of Penkyi Otu, the principal deity of the Effutus, who is considered the custodian and guardian of the Effutu traditional state. They may carry babies on their backs as a sign that they are ready for the responsibility of parenthood. They

\(^5\)Interview with Ms. Helena Obeng at Cape Coast, October 19, 1989.

\(^6\)Interview with Dr. Kwame Opare-Twum, March 22, 1990.
then return to their father’s house for four days where they are "fattened up", and when they emerge, they wear new cloth and jewellery, and may have their bodies decorated. Their friends and their mothers’ friends join in a procession around the town, singing songs that draw the attention of the community, e.g. "The chief’s daughter is passing" as well as songs of caution to the girl herself, e.g. "If a man calls you, you shouldn’t go."

At least one evening of drumming and dancing will be held at her father’s house, then she will put on velvet and a tekuwa, a black, turban-like headdress decorated with gold ornaments, and will go around the town to greet all those who participated in the ceremony.

Mrs Agnes Awotwe-Pratt, the head of the December 31st Women’s Movement in Winneba district (and the daughter of a chief) called the ceremony an "outdooring," similar in significance to the outdooring ceremony for a newborn child when it is presented to the community. The "wake-keeping" at the father’s house, where young men will come to drum and dance, indicates the passage from one stage of life to another. When the rites are over, the girl is considered to be mature, an adult, and ready for the responsibilities of adulthood.

The ritual of the ceremony helps to "check immature conceptions."7 When it is neglected, as it has been recently, a resulting marriage may not be solid. "They’re building their

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7Interview with Mrs. Agnes Awotwe-Pratt, Winneba, January 29, 1990.
buildings on sand, and they easily collapse," she said. In many cases, when a girl becomes pregnant before she has performed the puberty rites, she takes part in a bradze ceremony with her friends and family, a kind of purification rite. Once this has been accomplished, "then she can go on to marry and bring forth." If the couple do not marry, the man is expected to pay a fine for "unexpected marriage." (Marriage is considered to have taken place once a girl has conceived).

The nde was part of a wider discussion of changes to customary marriage rites at a traditional council meeting I attended. The meeting went on for several hours and was concerned primarily with the cost of various traditional ceremonies and the fines that should be set when appropriate behavior was not followed. It was attended by about 90 family heads, men and women. Three questions regarding nde were considered: should they keep the ceremony and minimise the cost, should they abandon it, or should they not interfere at all? After much discussion, the majority ruled that it should be reduced to a day or at the most three days instead of a week and that small gifts, such as a piece of cloth to the girl, eggs and yam for a meal, would be an adequate contribution for a family to make.

The performance of the nde ceremony ensures parental and family involvement in a girl's rite of passage. The family is

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8The meeting was held in Winneba October 28, 1989. See Endnote 1.
able to view the young men who come to see her and to make enquiries about their background. When a girl’s choice is acceptable to the family, they give their blessing to a potential union. When the rites are not performed however, a young man and woman may meet informally and decide they want to marry, and there may be little family involvement. In a series of meetings she was planning with women in the district, Mrs. Awotwe-Pratt planned to speak on the importance of maintaining the rites, even in adapted form, as the family’s participation at this stage of a girl’s life was seen to contribute to the viability of any marriage that might result.

Festivals -- Aboakyer and Akwanbo

A study of Ghanaian festivals, according to Opoku (1970), reveals some common features and beliefs. There is, first and foremost, the belief in life after death and the nearness of dead ancestors to their living descendants. Secondly, through the festivals, the people remember their past leaders and ask for their help and protection. Thirdly, the festivals are used to purify the whole traditional state so that the people can enter the new year with confidence and hope. Spirits are invoked to start the new year and make it a good one, and disputes are settled, bringing harmony back to the community (Warren, 1986).

Davidson (1969) points out that traditional peoples see festivals not so much as magical or mystical events, "but rather as a customary and comfortable affirmation of the way things
'ought to be', as a token that good tradition was going on, as an agreeably intimate if indirect statement about themselves and their identity" (p. 161).

Traditionally, Ghanaian festivals were occasions for chiefs and elders to display their regalia and to demonstrate how they had conducted the community's affairs over the year. They were often held after the harvest, when people had time to relax and to think of future plans. Today, they are often combined with development activities, as many of the townspeople who return home are educated professionals who want to bring amenities such as schools, clinics, and electricity to their birthplaces. Many of the traditional leaders, too, are educated, often wealthy, men, who have left government offices and businesses to take traditional titles.

During the festivals, participants tend to mingle as social equals, bonding in a communal spirit. During these particular times of the year, they can "step out of time temporarily, out of the chain of events, and during this period of disruption . . . set events in new directions" (Stern and Henderson, p. 123).

The most important festival in Winneba and one that draws people from many other areas is the annual deer hunt festival, Aboakyer. It commemorates the time the Effutu first settled at Winneba and installed their god, Penkye Otu. For many years the date of the festival varied, although it often coincided with Easter week. According to Akyempo (nd) the celebrations have become so well accepted as a national festival that a standard
date has been set (the first weekend in May) to accommodate those planning to attend from outside the town. A steering committee made up of civil servants, chiefs, and asafo representatives plan a program of entertainment and other activities, which may include art and craft exhibitions, dances, concert parties, and football matches. Since field work had been completed before the time for Aboakyer, the following account is based on Akyempo (nd), Wyllie (1968), Opoku (1970), the 1989 festival program, and discussions with members of the planning committee.

Normally the celebrations begin on a Thursday evening with a march by brass bands through the main streets, followed by some form of entertainment. This is repeated the following evening, when an all-night vigil is also kept by the traditional priests in the town. At the headquarters of both asafo companies, they invoke the ancestral spirits of Dentsifo and Tuafo. Libations are poured, prayers said, and guns fired. The officers and men of both companies then go to the beach to purify themselves by bathing in the sea.

At dawn on Saturday the asafo companies proceed to the hunting grounds, carrying clubs and singing war songs, having first exchanged greetings with the Omanhene, the queen mother, and other elders. After their departure, the adziwa groups sing and dance to keep up morale during the tense waiting period, to see which company will emerge victorious. Once a deer has been caught (it is hemmed in and taken alive), it is presented to the Omanhene, waiting on a dias. After a ritual of sanctification,
the Omanhene, asafo, and spectators proceed with singing, dancing, and drumming to the shrine of Penkye Otu, where the deer is prepared for sacrifice.

On the following day, Sunday, the asafo companies assemble before Penkye Otu for the Ebisatsir (seeing into the future) ritual. Here the god is invoked by the chief priest to reveal what fortune lies ahead in the new year. Four parallel lines are drawn on the ground, and where a rolling stone rests on them indicates the forecast -- the white clay line signifies drought; the charcoal line, heavy rains; the salt line, food in abundance; the red ochre line, conflict and strife. If the stone indicates clay or ochre, the priest of Penkye Otu must consult the god to determine what can be done to minimise the bad fortune.

Another important annual festival of the Fante and Gomoa people in the Winneba area is Akwanbo, or path-clearing festival. It dates from the time when migrants to the area cut paths to a river to find good drinking water. During the week of festivities, the asafo march through the town, singing and drumming. Prayers are offered to the river god, and the chief presents the asafo with bottles of drinks to mark the beginning of the new year. In many communities, the youth join the chief and elders in discussions about customary law and about town improvements. In the Central Region, this is the festival that seems to have most incorporated fund-raising and development activities. Citizens contribute to and discuss the building of school blocks, health posts, and "KVIPs" (Kumasi ventilated
improved pit latrine), and are often fined if they fail to attend. During the Cape Coast festival of Afahye, for example, local residents are required to pay C1,000 towards community projects, and those who return home from elsewhere are asked to pay C5,000.

Community improvements were very much a part of the Akwanbo festivals I attended in the area. At Ekumfi-Ebiram, west of Winneba, negotiations were underway between the chief and a Peace Corps volunteer whose church back home in Michigan was helping to build a school in the village. Communal labor had begun, and the volunteer had been honored for his efforts by being made an honorary asafo member, who took the name of Kofi Mensah. He wore traditional cloth and sat with the chief and elders (who had pillows on their stools) during the long hours of drumming and dancing. At Buduatta, east of Winneba, the opening of a health post was incorporated into festival activities. During the ceremony, just as the chief was flanked by his okyeame and elders when he spoke, so too was the PNDC Secretary for Health flanked by the Gomoa district secretary and the regional deputy from Cape Coast. Likewise, when the Canadian High Commissioner stepped forward to speak (Canada had contributed to the construction of the health post), the only two Canadians present were ceremoniously ushered to her right and left.

**Brass bands and masquerades**

The history of brass bands in Ghana dates back to the British
West African Frontier Force, when Ghanaians were trained to play trombones, trumpets, and saxophones as members of military bands. At the end of both world wars, many demobilized soldiers had gained enough experience to team up and perform, and were often accompanied by masquerade groups ("fancy dressers"), and stilt-walkers (Yankah, 1989). The Agona district in the Central Region, adjacent to Winneba, currently has about 15 such bands, and they play on occasions ranging from Independence Day celebrations to football matches. When a local boxer from Agona Nyakrom went to Accra to compete for a world championship title, both the brass band and the *asafo* accompanied him to perform at the ringside.

In Winneba, the custom of masqueraders going door-to-door at Christmas, accompanied by the bands, was established in the 1920s. The masquerading was organized into a competition as part of Independence celebrations in 1957. Since then, an annual competition and festival has been held in the town on New Year’s Day. For the past two years, it has been organized by the district Centre for National Culture.

The masquerade observed on January 1, 1990, drew several thousand people to a large park near the Advanced Teacher Training College, after a morning street parade. Four teams, each with its own dancers, band, and stilt-walkers, and wearing generally outlandish costumes made from raffia, cloth, paper, papier-mache, balloons and feathers, gathered for the competition. It began with a "march past" and inspection of costumes, then each team performed three dances -- "blues,"
highlife, and *atwemu* -- for the judges. Prizes were awarded for creativity. In the evening and throughout most of the next day, the masqueraders and the stilt-walkers were in the streets, attracting attention and performing for "dash" money from passers-by.

**Proverbs**

According to Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, proverbs in West Africa are "the palm oil with which words are eaten." Walter Ong notes that proverbs are not occasional devices. Rather, they are incessant. "They form the substance of thought itself. Thought in any extended form is impossible without them, for it consists in them" (Ong., 1982, p. 35).

Patnaik (1982) says verbal fencing with proverbs allows for criticism "without creating an unbridgeable impasse in communication. The proverb functions as a strategy to both release and contain emotion" (p. 99).

Discussing the social functions of "quoting behaviour" among the Nigerian Igbo, Penfield (1983) identifies several functional properties. "Depersonalization" allows the message to be conveyed indirectly and impersonally, so that the person is not held responsible for information that may be sensitive or embarrassing. The idiomatic nature of the proverb (a type of quoting behavior) and "frozen" word order isolate the statement from ordinary speech. Yet the speaker can take a certain evaluative position and encourage the listener or addressee to
take the same position. Such depersonalization makes the quote "a powerful tool of persuasion" (p. 6).

"Foregrounding" is another functional property of proverbs. Because of their metaphorical nature, proverbs are often ambiguous outside of a specific context. This ambiguity contrasts with the surrounding discourse, stands out and attracts attention. As one Igbo respondent explained to Penfield: "The proverb makes somebody think twice. If you use a proverb people might be more likely to take your advice" (p. 7).

Some of the functions of Ghanaian proverbs have been identified in a cultural studies text for secondary schools, published in 1989:
* They adorn the speech and make it rich and beautiful.
* They bring out the main point of the matter for clear understanding.
* They make an otherwise long statement short.
* They make listeners pay attention to what is being discussed
* They educate and teach morals.

Proverbs appear to be widely used and widely understood in Winneba. They form part of everyday speech and were often used to explain a practice or a custom to me. Several are cited here, along with their interpretations. It should be remembered, however, that the context of the situation and the context of the discourse itself are important determinants of proverb use. The proverb "flies"; it must be placed "on the right path" (Yankah, 1989).
1. "Something may smell nice, but after tasting it you realize it is not good to eat." Appearances can be deceptive; what may be appealing in the first instance may not bear up under closer scrutiny.

2. "When two persons sit on a stool, one should not get up without informing the other"; "The reason two deer walk together is so one can remove the mote from the other's eye." Both of these stress the need for co-operation, mutual trust, and joint responsibility.

3. "If you are ripe for marriage, buy your own plates, don't go borrowing." The stress is on self-sufficiency, and for adequate preparation for such an important step.

4. "When a man says he has danced until dawn, ask when he started"; "If a naked person says he will give you his cloth, ask of its name." Both encourage a healthy scepticism; a warning not to be taken in by smooth talkers. Similarly:

5. "A good bead doesn't talk." Things (or people) that are solid tend to be quiet. Conversely, "Empty barrels make the most noise." When you roll them, they clatter; full ones don't. People who make a lot of noise are often not worth listening to.

6. "Although the moon is brightest, the star is more constant." Something may be very attractive, and admired, but not stable.

7. "The oracle is always consulted three times." If at first you don't succeed, try again. First-time efforts may not be enough.

8. "The big pot around which old and young rejoice"; "The big
well that contains plenty of water." These are appellations often given to women who have not only produced several children but are able to care for them well.

In a comprehensive study of Ghanaian proverbs, Yankah (1989) notes that their form and meaning are not fixed; they move with usage. However, there is a control mechanism to ensure that the potential for multiple meanings is not exaggerated:

... the proverb user is guided in his choice of proverb (and the meaning therein) by his known position or attitude in the discourse interaction, what literal statements precede his citation, or statements uttered after the proverb. These defined attitudes and utterances have to coincide with the intended meaning of the proverb (p. 31).

In a more recent article that examines proverbs in relation to family planning issues in Ghana, Yankah (1992) cites those that stress the importance of parental care and nurturing, and the quality of family life. Proverbs such as "polygamy spells poverty" and "if you have five wives, so do you have five tongues" draw attention to the economic realities of large families. Yankah concludes that proverbs are

... the most regular channels through which information reaches a majority of our people. Proverbs, dirges, and various traditional modes of discourse should not be viewed as a set of static channels that are fixed in number or doomed to uniquely convey pre-existing values. Traditional modes of communication may change themes or style or may adapt themselves to novel situations, as the need arises (p. 23).

In fact, new proverbs have emerged with the government's current promotion of self-help and community effort (Warren, 1990). Some of these are also reflected in new fabric designs, in hair styles, and on linguists' staffs. Subtleties of language are thus translated into the visual arts, where they are reinforced
in stools and other carvings, on cloth and beads, and notably on buses, taxis, and other forms of public transportation.\textsuperscript{9} The boundaries between verbal and visual communication thus become blurred.

**Summary**

The popularity and appeal of *asafo* performers, their ability to hold an audience's attention, their skill at improvisation, and the didactic nature of their song texts make them worthy of consideration as adaptable media forms. The *adziwa* songs focus on family relationships and on the preparation of young women for marriage and motherhood. Puberty rites and seasonal festivals confirm social values, but they are not static occasions, fixed in time. The use of these forms to assist in health education in Winneba needs to be explored. First, however, it is necessary to examine health care issues and resources in the district and the current forms of communication used in health education programs.

**Endnotes**

1. The issues discussed at the traditional council meeting revealed current issues in the community and attitudes towards them. One issue was the amount of "head money" that should be paid by a man's family to the parents of the bride. Discussion centered around reducing it, as the money spent on a ring,

\textsuperscript{9}An interesting example of the verbal content of visual art is cited by Warren. See Endnote 2.
whiskey, cloth and other gifts was considered excessive. Many young women were "bringing forth" without husbands, as the men couldn't afford the cost of the ceremony. It was also decided to set a standard amount for both literate and illiterate women, as "the Bible makes no distinction." (This was met by a rejoinder: "When you buy a new car, the price is different depending on the model"). In the end, it was agreed that two cloths and C5,000 would meet the requirement, although a chief would pay C7,000 and a bottle of schnapps.

With regards to "unexpected marriage," it was determined that the man involved would pay C25,000 and be asked to perform the customary rites. An amount of C50,000 was suggested, but this was considered too much. Women would know that most men couldn't pay and would be more likely to consider abortion.

Fines for adultery were also set -- anyone who "flirted" with a chief's wife, and was caught, would be liable for one sheep, C50,000, and two bottles of schnapps. If a chief took another person's wife, the penalty would be even more severe.

The "seniority payment," to be paid to a senior wife if a man took another, was set at C4,000. If he defaulted, the council would fine him C10,000 and one bottle of schnapps.

No fine was set for abandoning a child at birth. Rather, a complaint was to be filed with the council, which would then determine each case individually.

2. Warren describes a sculpture, "The Initiated Dancer," created
at the University of Wisconsin by Ghanaian sculptor Kewku Andrews. Although it had an aesthetic impact on the Americans who viewed it, its deeper meanings were not understood or appreciated. According to Warren, however, anyone versed in Akan culture would know that the type of headtie the woman wears, called "save for the future," symbolizes maturity. Her particular plaited hair style symbolizes attainment of womanhood. The cape covering her shoulders translates as "protect yourself from temptation after marriage." The placement of her feet, right foot forward and left back, represents the proverb which states that it is unwise to measure the depth of a river with both feet, symbolic of the care which a young woman must take in choosing a husband. Three adinkra symbols carved at the base of the sculpture represent security, prosperity, and faithfulness.
"Many fishers together will catch even the small fishes."

V. HEALTH CARE IN GHANA -- WEAVING NEW PRACTICES INTO OLD

For many years following independence, the structure of health care services in Ghana, like many African countries, remained essentially that of colonial administrations. An urban-oriented and hospital-based system, it emphasised curative care that required trained professionals, medical technology, and considerable financial resources (Sharpston, 1972; deKadt and Segall, 1981; Aidoo, 1982). The following section reviews the evolution of the health care system since Independence, draws attention to the recent emphasis on preventive and primary health care, and examines the problems facing health care workers in Winneba striving to attain "Health for All" by the end of the century.

The colonial legacy of health care

In a study of the distribution of medical care in the late 1960s, Sharpston (1972) found doctors were the key unit of the health care system, a system based on the British model where general practitioners were the health workers of "first contact" for the general population. Transferred to Ghana, however, it provided "an uneven and haphazard provision of medical care" (p. 206). There was significant geographical disparity in the ratio of doctors to population and a generally high concentration of doctors in the southern triangle formed by Accra, Kumasi, and
Takoradi. (Sharpston’s figures for 1969 show 29 doctors per 100,000 population in the greater Accra region, compared to two per 100,000 in the Central Region and one in the Upper Region).

Sharpston identified social and cultural factors, as well as economic ones, to account for the imbalance. He noted the strong influence of the British medical tradition in Ghana -- most doctors practising at the time had been trained in Britain --- and the tendency for those trained to adopt urban, professional values. They preferred the opportunities for specialisation, research, and "interesting" cases available in the big city hospitals to a steady diet of malaria and malnutrition in the rural areas. This emphasis on curative care was reflected in the allocation of government funds.¹ Constituting a tight elite with high status, the doctors also had political control over the Ministry of Health and were subject to few pressures from public opinion or organized groups.² In some hospitals, patients were regarded almost as an inconvenience, e.g. Kumasi, where many of them were accommodated on plentiful floor space. Installing additional beds was seen as an encouragement for even more to come.

There was also a strong feeling among doctors that they must maintain "proper" (i.e. international) standards. Auxiliary

¹As late as 1978, 85 per cent of health expenditures were allocated to hospital care, with the remaining 15 per cent directed to primary health care (Morrow, 1983).

²As one Ghanaian put it: "Even big men are in the hands of the doctors when they are ill" (Sharpston, p. 216).
workers were seen as "pseudo-doctors" who would lower standards and thus affect the status of the fully qualified professionals.

Sharpston concluded that the cultural environment at the time worked against providing appropriate health care outside the major centres:

To run medical services in the rural areas requires administrative effort, an ability to make do with the meagre facilities available, and a willingness to live in primitive surroundings, away from the bright lights. Ghanaian doctors, with their attitudes derived from Western medical circles and Western middle-class life, dislike administrative work which they see as low status; wish to practise sophisticated Western medicine and demand sophisticated equipment, and want the comforts of big towns like Accra and Kumasi (p. 215).

In 1978, the Ministry of Health collaborated with the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex to study existing health care services in two districts (one in the Eastern Region and one in the Volta Region) which they considered broadly representative of the situation in the country. In both districts, high infant mortality rates (100+ per 1,000 live births) were reported, largely from preventable diseases; more than half of all reported deaths were due to infectious and parasitic diseases, with malnutrition often being a contributory cause. Communicable diseases, such as tuberculosis, yaws and polio, were a major problem, and measles were a major cause of death. A document prepared by the newly-established planning unit in the Ministry of Health attributed the lack of progress in health services to misplaced priorities in the system. Resources were funneled towards a minority of the population having access to hospital-based services which catered to specialised health
problems. Four particular conditions were identified:
* An emphasis on the construction of facilities rather than the provision of services
* Over-sophisticated training, with emphasis on specialized hospital-based services for the few, rather than preventive services for everyone
* Poor and inequitable deployment of health staff
* A 'top-down' health care delivery system with a noticeable lack of co-ordination with other sectors (social welfare and community development, water and sewerage, agriculture, etc.) and little or no community involvement (deKadt and Segall, 1981; Morrow, 1983).

Because little attention was given to preventive care, hospital services were overloaded, thus creating the demand for more hospital services. Few resources were left for primary health care, even if it had been perceived as a priority. Morrow summed up the situation:

The people, their elders, leaders and chiefs, and therefore the political decision-makers perceive the basic issues of health care in terms of hospitals and doctors. This view is reinforced by doctors themselves who have been trained in the sophisticated, intellectually intriguing disciplines of diagnosis and therapy of individually ill people. Their attention is focused on the sick who seek their help. But the need is to maintain the health of those who are not yet ill (p. 282).

The deteriorating economic situation in the late 70s and early 80s further exacerbated shortcomings in the health care system. Drought caused severe food shortages to the extent that Catholic Relief Services began feeding programs. The cocoa export industry continued to be hard hit by low world prices; consequently, foreign currency reserves could not meet the demand
for drugs and hospital supplies. By the early 80s, shortages of basics such as bandages, needles and syringes were widespread. Physicians joined the exodus of teachers and other professionals out of the country, as salaries had fallen well below the cost of living. By 1984, 51 per cent of the 1,665 doctors in Ghana had emigrated to other countries, and of the 817 who remained, only 57 per cent were in government service (Good, 1988).

In an attempt to cope with the constrained economic circumstances, the Rawlings government introduced user fees for health services in 1985. Hospital and clinic fees increased by 800 to 1,000 per cent (Waddington, 1989). After studying the impact of user charges in the Ashanti-Akim region, Waddington concluded that in some ways they have been a success -- in recovering costs and maintaining urban utilisation. However, some advantages did not materialise because the health infrastructure has not changed adequately. Equity and affordability have been problematic -- for some of the population, services are no longer affordable. These services have historically been provided by separate divisions of the Ministry, each controlling its own staff and each concerned with its own area of intervention.

The PHC model

Since the WHO/UNICEF conference on primary health care (PHC) held at Alma-Ata in 1978 (referred to in the Introduction) most countries in sub-Saharan Africa have formally adopted PHC as a
philosophical commitment. WHO has published guidelines, formulated strategies, and set goals for achieving "Health for All by the Year 2000." PHC has been heralded by the international health community, NGOs, and many African health ministries as the approach most likely to provide rural populations with access to appropriate and more equitable health care. In Ghana, the deteriorating economic situation may have spurred the Ministry of Health to look for low-cost alternative approaches to health care. As it became increasingly obvious that more hospital construction was impossible, a primary health care system that required relatively little capital construction was welcomed by the Ministries of Economic Planning and Finance. It was still necessary, however, to reiterate to health professionals and to the public that a primary health care strategy was not an inferior substitute for hospitalization, and that the procedures to be introduced could have maximum impact on public health without the direct intervention of doctors (Morrow, 1983).

The Ghanaian government's current decentralization policy could work towards improving the implementation of the PHC model, as the regions ought to become an increasingly important force for structural change. However, a policy review prepared in 1984 concluded that ministries that had been decentralized to that time continued to work under the direction of parent ministries in Accra, and control of the budget had not passed to the district level. A country report prepared for African Confidential in 1989 raised doubts about the likelihood of the
new district structures fostering the efficiency or the participation and local autonomy which the government had promised. "The only real decentralization has been in the negative sense of passing more central government responsibilities to the district assemblies, without providing the resources to match" (p. 3).³

In a policy and planning report prepared for WHO, Cassels and Janovsky (1991) are not optimistic. They point out that the regions and districts that have begun to show signs of success in primary health care have done so despite the existing "vertical empires" that have become established in the Ministry of Health. They warn that there is still a high risk that resource allocation under decentralization will favor facility-based curative care, "in stark contrast to the traditional assertion that primary health care implementation will improve significantly under decentralization" (p. 18).

Working towards "Health for All" in Ghana

The PHC strategy envisioned for Ghana aimed to extend basic health services to 80 per cent of the population by the early 1990s and to achieve significant reductions in illness, disability, and death. Twenty-five "disease problems" were identified according to their importance, that is, their impact

³ In Winneba, the health team's operating estimates for the first three months of 1990 were not approved until March. Petrol for the jeep was running low and repairs could not be made. New programs were suspended.
on the population. Malaria, measles, child pneumonia, sickle-cell anaemia, severe malnutrition and premature births headed the list.

Service was to be provided on three levels. At Level A, health workers trained in preventive procedures such as pregnancy management would be selected and compensated by the community. These would include traditional birth attendants. Level B would include community health nurse/midwives and environmental/sanitation officers, who would supervise the Level A group and take referrals from them. Level C, the district level, was the management level. It would include a health team made up of a district medical officer, public health nurses, health specialists (in maternal and child health and family planning, communicable disease control and immunization, nutrition education and environmental health) and a senior medical officer at the hospital (Morrow, 1983).

Nursing personnel engaged in maternal and child health care fell into several categories, including public health nurses, community nurses, enrolled nurses, nurse midwives and midwives, who have followed a variety of post-primary and post-secondary training and specialization. One document\(^4\) attributes the proliferation of groups to the influence of the Medical Association and the Nurses Association, who want, as much as possible, "to keep up British Commonwealth accepted standards."

\(^4\) The document is undated and unpublished, but was likely prepared in 1984 by a member of the Department of Community Medicine at the University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.
Each category must meet particular requirements in deference to the professional associations, and efforts by the Ministry at rationalization have met with little success.

The composition of the health team working in Winneba district during 1989-90 reflected Level C, although the post of district medical officer, the team leader, was vacant. The team was also included in a broader management committee, composed of health personnel and allied departments -- Community Development, Water and Sewerage, Education and Agriculture. Much of their attention and energy was directed towards reducing the high rate of infant, under five and maternal mortality, combatting malnutrition and promoting nutrition education, reducing the incidence of communicable diseases, and encouraging an understanding and adoption of family planning practices. Such an undertaking is a challenging task. Current indicators of health status reveal:

* A life expectancy of 55 years
* An infant mortality rate of 90 per 1,000 live births, and an under 5 mortality rate of 140 per 1,000. These figures are in the same range as those for other West African countries such as Togo, Cameroon and Ivory Coast. Comparable rates for Canada are 10 and 9 per 1,000.

5 When I asked about this, I was told that one would come. However, staffing young medical graduates in the districts has been a problem since the PHC program's inception (Ibid., 1984).

6These figures are taken from the Ministry of Health's annual report for 1991, and the country report prepared for Save the Children in 1992.
* A maternal mortality rate of 10 per 1,000 live births.
* Approximately 45 per cent national immunization coverage for young children against tuberculosis, diphtheria, polio and measles.
* Approximately 8 per cent of women of reproductive age use some form of contraception provided by the Ministry of Health.

Although the statistics paint a dismal picture, they are fairly representative of the situation in many developing countries. (UNICEF'S 1991 "basic indicators" table places Ghana in the "high" under 5 mortality category, with 28 other countries. Thirty-three countries have a worse record; 67 have a better one). It is estimated that one out of every 20 children born in the developing world dies before reaching five years of age (Wallace, 1990). The majority of these deaths are the result of five common childhood diseases that are preventable through immunization -- measles, whooping cough, neonatal tetanus, polio and diphtheria. Most of these diseases also contribute to malnutrition, infection, and growth retardation. In one African study, measles was found to be the precipitating cause in half the cases of hospitalization for malnutrition (Wallace, 1990). The remainder of this chapter will detail particular problems faced by the health care team in Winneba, using information gleaned from interviews with each member. It will be seen that a variety of factors make their task a challenging one, factors related to local habits, cultural attitudes and ignorance (and the team’s response to these), as well as to time and
training constraints and a lack of supporting infrastructure. Given the complexity of the problems facing the health care workers, it would be naive to suggest that better and improved communication would solve them. However, two areas identified as deserving attention were the need for more input into community education and the need for reinforcement of messages. The need could be met, at least partially, if members of the wider community were recruited to provide the reinforcement.

Health care in Winneba

Regular observation at the maternal and child health (MCH) weekly baby clinics showed they were well attended and appeared to provide a social occasion for the women. Mothers wore their best cloth and jewellery, and babies were often turned out in booties and bonnets to be weighed and vaccinated. The women received instruction in when to begin weaning and in how to prepare a weaning food ("weanimix") from cereals, maize, groundnuts and/or beans, more nutritious than the traditional banku diet, made from cassava. Many of the women buy the mixture at the clinic rather than preparing it at home, a fact initially attributed to "laziness" on their part by the health team member in charge of nutrition education. When pressed, however, he admitted that their unwillingness to prepare the mixture could also be related to lack of time -- they are busy going to their farms, preparing meals and looking after their children, often

7Interview with Mr. George Aketeweh, December 6, 1989.
with little assistance from their husbands. They are also often "bringing forth," and tired from a lack of spacing between pregnancies. Although the weanimix is available, it is not widely used, and babies who have been healthy during their first year of breast feeding often suffer weight loss when they are weaned on the traditional, largely carbohydrate, diet. 

Nutritional problems identified in the district include women's uncertainty about when to start breast-feeding and how long to continue it. Often babies are given foods with little nutritional value, such as mashed kenkey and cocoanut water, as soon as they are born. Mr. Aketeweh called these "bad practices" which delay the onset of milk production, so that the baby may be denied the benefit of breast milk in the crucial first days of life. When weaning is begun, traditional practices and "inherited misunderstandings" often contribute to a diet high in carbohydrate and low in protein. For example, mothers usually have fish in the house and eat it themselves, but they don't give it to their children because "it is not their habit."

Other factors regarding diet emerged. Because the coastal soil is sandy, many vegetables are not easily grown and therefore not well known. (My own experience in meal preparation revealed that some women were not familiar with how to cook green beans, brought from Accra, and a small experimental lettuce patch outside the house drew comments from passersby). People who raise chickens usually sell the eggs rather than using them to supplement their own diets. Also, in many homes, the man is fed
first and fed best, based on a deep-rooted value that the man is head of the household and deserves the best. "Even educated men expect that," Mr. Aketeweh said. Women and children tend to get what is left over, and often the amount and quality does not meet their nutritional requirements. "We hope to overcome it," I was told, but there was little indication as to how this might be done. Very little nutrition education is directed towards men -- women have always been the target group.

Mr. Aketeweh attributed the high incidence of malnutrition among children in their first two years of life to parents' ignorance and poverty, and to a lack of adequate coverage by the health services. The sanitary environment is poor, and children who are not immunized may contract measles or whooping cough, which predisposes them to malnutrition. He said there is still a lack of awareness of good health practices, and house-to-house visits in Winneba often fail to motivate people to attend the clinics. When the team travels to the surrounding area, they depend primarily on lectures and demonstrations to get their messages across.

**Time constraints**

Of all the public health efforts in the district, immunization has been the most successful. Attendance at clinics has also been good, although there is a problem of follow-up for the second and third injections necessary for effective immunization. This is an ongoing problem throughout the
developing world (Wallace, 1990). As noted earlier, factors identified by Adekunle (1978) in Nigeria still appear to be major impediments to completing immunization programs (see Endnote to Chapter 1).

Time is a major constraint for women, who are generally responsible for children's health. "They want to go to their farms," I was told. "They can see the results of farming easier." The problem is particularly acute at Kasua and Awutu, where the immunization team often has to go house-to-house tracking down children who need follow-up doses of vaccine. Since these villages are by no means isolated (they are on the main road between Winneba and Accra), one might wonder why the women do not make time for a procedure that is so crucial to their children's well-being. Two members of the health team indicated that often women are simply not convinced of how important it is to complete the process. They present themselves for the team's first visit, when rallied by the chief or assembly member, but because the team is in and out quickly there is no time for adequate explanations and persuasion. A slight fever or swelling, a normal occurrence after a vaccination, is enough to deter a mother from bringing her child again.

An examination of the immunization team's itinerary from October to December, 1989, shows eight to ten towns and villages scheduled for visitation per day. Given that many of these

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8 Interview with Sister Gloria Vanderpuye, nursing officer for Winneba district, December 4, 1989.
villages are off the main road, the teams are facing a considerable challenge in providing the service delivery alone. The opportunity to adequately prepare the population on the significance of the immunization program, and on the consequences of not completing it, simply does not exist.9

Under the PHC strategy, much of the follow-up and support was to be provided by community health workers (CHW) who would, after about three months of training, return to their own villages. They would be on the "front lines" as educators and monitors of health practices on a day-to-day basis. Oakley (1989) has determined some of the key aspects of the non-medical content of their training, including an ability to interpret health concepts and give them practical effect, an understanding of the internal dynamics of their community, an understanding of communication processes and methods, and an ability to work with small groups to increase awareness and decision-making. Initially, about 80 CHWs were trained in Winneba district, but at the time of field work only about 18 were practising. Mr. Aketewah attributed this situation to a lack of community support. Each community with a health worker was to pay her/him an allowance in cash or in kind, provide office space, and raise money for essential drugs. When the support didn’t materialize, the workers moved on. A further training program was scheduled,

9Cassels and Janovsky (1991) question the extent to which the emphasis on coverage targets compromises the need to ensure quality, and to improve public understanding of the purpose and benefits of immunization.
with an effort to be made to recruit older people who might be more content to remain in the rural areas.

This lack of community response also contributes to wasted time and effort on the part of the health team that travels out from Winneba. Often, they leave early in the morning with their vaccines, but by the time they reach the villages most people have gone to their farms. Out of 25 children in a village, they might immunize eight, then wait most of the day, often without eating, for the others to return. According to Mr. S.K. Zor, the officer in charge of communicable disease control, they would be willing to do their work in the evening -- "evening is a good time for education, after meals" -- but there is no incentive or encouragement from the ministry to meet travel expenses or pay for food for the team.

Mr. Zor also expressed dissatisfaction with a lack of cooperation between team members and chiefs, assemblymen and CDR representatives. When the team arrives in a village, the assembly or CDR member may not be there to offer support. Transportation is always a problem, and although the district council had provided a small truck, the GPRTU had not followed through on their offer of taxi service. "The car never comes," he said.

Several members of the health team in Winneba were concerned about the lack of time for sufficient planning and preparation for health care delivery. Ideally, they would like to visit a village two or three times in advance of an immunization exercise, to create awareness of the importance of vaccination,
and to stress the necessity of receiving three doses. Parents, they said, need to be convinced that preventive health care should take priority over farming and other activities on occasion, and that good health is each person's responsibility, not that of the health worker. But time and transportation are at a premium for the health team, and upon their arrival, they administer the vaccines as quickly as possible (from a portable cooler, which loses its efficacy as the day progresses) and proceed to their next appointment. Thus the service is delivered, but its significance and importance to long-term health care is often not conveyed.

As a result of these constraints, much of the "educational" effort made by the health team -- "we go in and carry out our education" -- is largely an exercise in information-transmission. A jeep with a public address system is widely used to announce the beginning of a campaign or to gather people to assemble at a particular place and time. When they have assembled, they may be given a short lecture on some aspect of health care. Posters and printed material are in short supply and are often collected when the team leaves to go on to the next appointment. Although films on the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and on guinea worm were available, no suitable place had been found to show them.

"Hiding" health problems

According to the senior medical officer for the district, there is a tendency among clients to "hide" health problems from
the doctors and nurses, which usually exacerbates their condition. In instances of ectopic pregnancy, which produces pain and internal bleeding, women are apt to consult a healer or prophet first. By the time they reach the hospital, their condition has become acute. They may also feel uncomfortable discussing a condition such as fibroids, and only come for help when they have reached an advanced stage.

As for AIDS, the doctor said those who are able to recognize symptoms and know there is no cure avoid seeking any alleviating treatment. He mentioned two students at the National Academy of Music who had been identified as HIV carriers -- all blood donations intended for transfusions are now screened -- but they had not been told. "How do you tell them?" he asked. "He may go and take poison if he knows."

In his opinion, those afflicted preferred to suffer in silence. He knew of four cases in the town in the 18-24 age group; two had recently died. He said those he visited at home knew they had the disease, and he knew it, but they would not agree to send blood samples to Korle Bu for confirmation. When someone died without the confirmation, he would write "chronic diarrhoea" on the death certificate. AIDS, he said, was a disgraceful disease, and families would not want to be known as an "AIDS family." He compared public attitudes to AIDS to those held previously towards tuberculosis or leprosy.

Community mobilisation
In an attempt to forge a broader public health alliance, UNICEF Ghana commissioned a "social mobilisation analysis" to identify individuals and organizations with the potential to act as health communicators and to determine the type of support they would need in order to maximize that potential. The survey revealed "a vast, largely untapped reservoir of organizational capacities, skills, and commitment to improving child health" (Tweneboa-Kodua, et al., 1991, p. 126). Following the analysis, participants at a workshop hosted by the Ministry of Mobilisation concluded that information was a crucial constraint on efforts to promote child care, and several recommendations were endorsed to improve its dissemination. Among these were the inclusion of organizations such as the Trades Union Congress, CDR members, the Ministry of Information and the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana as mobilising agents. Although all of these have strengths as "mobilisers," the capacity of some to educate may be minimal. For example, despite the national structure of the CDRs, their character and roles vary from community to community, and in some areas they have established a reputation for coercion in promoting community development.10 The Ministry of Information, which operates some 300 information centres and 44 cinema vans around the country, has to date been minimally

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10 Allegations of CDR members flogging citizens who had not paid their water rates were reported by the Daily Graphic on November 2, 1989. In an address to Brong Ahafo cadres at Sunyani, the head of the National CDR Secretariat warned members that "ruthless action" would be taken against those "who indulge in criminal activities to tarnish the image of the revolution" (Daily Graphic, January 17, 1990).
involved in grassroots development activities. It exists primarily to propagate government programs and policies on economic reform and structural adjustment. According to the district information officer in Winneba, the officers are summoned to Accra to be briefed on new policies; they can then "do" up to 12 towns in a day, spreading the message by van and loudspeaker.¹¹ During January and February, 1990, the Winneba district office was primarily engaged in disseminating the head of state's New Year message and budget speech. It was also circulating a film on the anniversary of the revolution, and one on chiefly regalia called "Panoply of Ghana."

The capacity of groups and institutions to mobilise targeted groups is an important factor, but there are other considerations. Ruijter, a UNICEF officer in Angola, reported evaluation studies from Zambia, Angola and Mozambique, that revealed despite greatly improved immunization coverage following social mobilisation programs, knowledge and understanding of immunization were significantly lower than adoption rates. That is, despite large turnouts by mothers and children during immunization campaigns, many of the women did not know what the immunization prevented and why it was important for their children to have them. Ruijter attributed this "reverse KAP gap"

¹¹Interview with Mr. Isaac Quartsen, district information officer, February 2, 1990.
to two factors. One was the mass media's role, which was limited to motivating people to visit the health centres and announcing times, places and dates. The other was the role played by political party functionaries, which allowed for little local creativity and often provoked resistance. The nature of these groups -- in Ghana's case, CDRs, the December 31st Women's Movement, and the Mobisquads -- may limit the genuine and active participation of target audiences in these programs. Ruijter concluded that although these groups were often effective mobilisers, they were not always effective educators.

As a result, the changes brought about by the massive immunization efforts seem rather superficial, because the people's adoption of immunization was the result of temporary social pressure and control, rather than the outcome of a conscious decision or evaluation process. This concentration of the campaign approach on achieving quick results among large groups of people reinforced a tendency to impose ideas on the people, rather than allowing them time to incorporate these new ideas into their existing framework of thoughts (1991, p. 41).

Building on an existing frame of reference is the strength of indigenous performers who communicate through song, proverbs, poetry and dance. In a 1992 publication, Kwesi Yankah, a linguist at the University of Ghana, advocates the integration of such "traditional collective knowledge" into the dissemination of information on population issues and family planning. Besides the cultural significance of their content, he points out that the traditional communication forms are persuasive devices used to

12In the diffusion of innovations tradition, it has been shown that while change often occurs in people's knowledge and attitudes, changes in practice lag behind. In this case, the so-called KAP gap has been reversed; practice is high but knowledge low.
effectively reinforce or change attitudes.

Their persuasive strength partly derives from the attribution of their authorship to tradition or ancestry. They are persuasive because their sentiments are based on the collective experience of an idealised set of people the society reveres (p. 18).

He cites as an example a recent song by a popular Ghanaian folk musician, Koo Nimo. The song, which warned against deforestation, appealed to the traditional values of foresight and planning for the future. These were not novel concepts, but existing ones that were adopted to meet a contemporary challenge.

Yankah's own collection of proverbs that reflects attitudes to fertility and family size includes those that stress the importance of parental care, responsibility, nurturing, and the quality of family life. These, he suggests, are analagous to the messages health care workers are attempting to convey. Couched in language that reflects local beliefs and experience, language that is rich in symbolism, they become contextualized for members of a society who celebrate verbal skills and verbal virtuosity.

**Summary**

This chapter has traced the evolution of the health care system in Ghana since Independence, documented some of the problems faced by the primary health care team in Winneba, and indicated the necessity of a collaborative approach to solving them. The role to be played by indigenous communicators and communication forms in this collaboration is detailed in the concluding chapter.
"The plant in the courtyard is not a medicine."

VI. INTEGRATING LOCAL RESOURCES INTO HEALTH EDUCATION

The preceding chapter has shown that the human and physical resources available for health education in Winneba district are often stretched to the limit. Health care providers are not able to spend as much time as they would like with their clients, given their tight schedules, and the demands of managing (often concurrent) campaigns on immunization, family planning, and child survival. Their priority is service delivery -- getting the vaccines, the contraceptives, and the nutritional supplements distributed -- and they are often not in a position to devote necessary time and attention to two problem areas they have identified: lack of adequate information input and reinforcement of health care messages.

Input is related to the availability and the mobility of those who are disseminating the information. It is a function of a basic communication component -- accessibility.

Improving access

As noted in chapter 3, the mass media are being used to promote development efforts. The English-language press, however, limits most of its coverage to reporting the successes of community improvement efforts around the country, and the centralized programming of GBC is often out of touch with local concerns and interests. The media that most actively address the local situation in Winneba include Wonsuom, a monthly publication
in the vernacular, and the FM radio service broadcast from Apam.

To get their messages accross, the Winneba health team depends heavily on face-to-face communication, whether visiting the villages in their district or talking to people (primarily women) who visit the MCH and family planning clinics in the town. In both cases, time is limited. Although team members often carry posters and brochures with them (illustrating correct ORT procedures, preventive measures against the spread of guinea worm, or proper use of condoms and contraceptive pills) they take these away when they leave to be used at the next stop. Thus their own interaction with particular groups is limited, as is the opportunity for reinforcement of their message. The timing of visits to villages in the district is determined by the health team’s schedule and availability of transportation. As a result, the turnout is often lower than anticipated, as people are away at their farms, collecting fish from the beach and smoking it for sale, or engaging in a variety of other daily chores.

Women who come to the clinics are captive audiences, yet the time available there is often not sufficient for the health team to provide adequate explanation and persuasion. Lister (1986) has noted a similar situation in Nigeria, where "it is unfortunate that in many of our clinics .. instruction has necessarily been

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Although I observed posters in both English and Fante at a few locations around the town (at the clinic, the lorry park and the traditional council office), all the brochures I collected were printed in English. When I brought this up with the regional health officer at Cape Coast, he chuckled and shook his head, and said there were plans to have them translated into the vernacular.
curtailed or the day’s work would not be done” (p. 71).

The clinic setting provides an opportunity for UNICEF’S "partners in the alliance" for improved health care. The MCH clinic is held on Tuesdays, the day traditionally dedicated to the sea deity, Nana Bosombo. Fishermen refrain from going to sea and usually spend the day on the beach mending their nets. Consequently, there are no fish for the women to collect, smoke or sell, and their time is relatively free. (I have observed them performing funeral dances on that day, even though related funeral ceremonies took place the previous weekend). As virtually every woman is an adziwa member, and many of their songs emphasize the responsibilities that accompany marriage and motherhood, it seems fitting that their talents be applied to such a setting. Some resistance to their recruitment is likely, however; this will be discussed later in the chapter.

At the same time, health care workers soliciting support to spread their messages beyond the clinic could seek out more traditional occasions and settings. The traditional council and the December 31st Women’s Movement have both expressed an interest in rejuvenating puberty rites, in an adapted form at lower cost. In an interview, the head of the movement in Winneba, Mrs. Agnes Awotwe-Pratt, indicated her intention to work to revive the rites and to incorporate information on child survival and family planning into them. As schnapps instead of palm wine is now used to pour libation, and girls raised to the Christian value of modesty now cover their breasts, advice on spacing
births and child care would seem an equally compatible part of the ceremony. In Sierra Leone, ingenuity on the part of local midwives produced remarkable results. When a survey revealed that neonatal tetanus accounted for almost 25 per cent of infant mortality, tetanus vaccinations were introduced into puberty rites:

As girls entered the initiation grove their mundane clothes were removed, they were washed with protective 'medicine' and given the first tetanus toxoid injection. A few weeks later, when they emerged with the new status of women, the ritual done at the beginning was repeated, including the second tetanus injection. Neonatal tetanus has virtually disappeared from programme villages (MacCormack, 1984, p. 205).

In a similar scenario in Winneba, young girls who might not be comfortable approaching a family planning clinic would be given access to information on reproduction that is crucial to their own and their future families' well-being. Messages heard on the radio or read in the newspaper (there is little sex education in the classroom) would be reinforced in an appropriate cultural context. Such a context often provides the "comfort zone" necessary when addressing sensitive topics such as marriage, "unexpected marriage", reproduction, and family responsibility.

Festivals also provide venues where accessibility to health education could be broadened. It has been noted earlier that these occasions — Aboakyer, Akwanbo, and Afahye in the Central

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2 A 1989 study by Obeng-Quaidoo showed teen-agers were often embarrassed by the comments made by family planning staff, e.g. "young girls should avoid sex." His findings relate to those cited by Colle (1991) in Nepal. See Endnote 1.
Region -- increasingly focus on community improvements and the quality of community life. Most of the inputs, however, come from official sources, including national and regional secretaries for health and social welfare, and district assembly members. A spot in the program is always made available for a speech or formal address, in which those in attendance are exhorted to protect their children’s health through immunization, be responsible parents by planning their families, etc. Next on the program may be a "display by cultural groups."³ Many of the songs and dances performed will incorporate the same persuasive intent, but the message will be encoded metaphorically, e.g. songs that advise young women to wait until they are prepared for the responsibilities of children and family, or songs that chastize young men for not living up to their responsibilities. The appeal of these groups, and their entertainment value, is easily recognized, but the relationship between their messages and those that have been officially communicated is not as readily apparent. Thus the opportunity for reinforcement is missed.

An increased reliance on local resources might also take some of the pressure off officials from numerous organizations -- the National Council on Women and Development, the December 31st Women’s Movement, the Ghana National Commission for Children, the Expanded Program on Immunization, the National Mobilization Program -- who seem to be constantly on the move promoting their

³ This phrase is taken from the Winneba Aboakyer program for 1989.
In terms of improving accessibility to health care messages, the role of the spiritualist churches should also be addressed here. It has been noted in chapter 3 that these churches provide explanations and offer remedies to members who are experiencing any form of physical, emotional, or spiritual distress. Many of their rituals are devoted "to the attainment of good health, and to warding off misfortune and suffering" (Olupona, 1989, p. 59).

These churches were largely ignored in the 1991 social mobilization analysis conducted for UNICEF. As part of the study, the authors surveyed parents in district capitals and villages to determine their most trusted sources of health information; they found that drugsellers, religious leaders, and herbalists were the leading sources after health professionals, family and friends. Drugsellers and herbalists were excluded as "mobilizers" on the grounds that they were lacking in commitment to promoting community health, as they were profit-oriented and often made their money from their customers' over-use of drugs. Although religious organizations were seen as structures that could form part of a national alliance for health care, only the established Christian and Moslem groups were mentioned.

The exclusion of the prophets and their churches may have been an oversight, or it may be related to the spiritual nature of healing characteristic of these churches. Generally illness is seen to have been caused by an external force, whether it be evil spirits or some sort of curse or spell cast by an enemy. The
cures also rely heavily on divine intervention, often when God or the Holy Spirit speaks through dreams, visions, or trances. Little emphasis is placed on individual responsibility for wellness, or on preventive measures to ensure it, a large part of the PHC message. At the same time, healers tend to be protective of their function and disinclined to consider any cure that does not originate in prayer and faith. Kailing (1989), however, attests to a willingness on the part of some leaders (MDCC in Ghana and Jesus the Light Mission in Nigeria) to adopt a more tolerant attitude towards medical healing and to confer on it some measure of legitimacy.

Another reason for the exclusion of prophets and healers in the mobilization study may be that many of them have recently been declared "spiritually fraudulent," preying on the naivety of their followers to extort money to support their own affluent lifestyles (Ephson, 1989). In 1989-90, their activities contributed to the establishment of a Religious Bodies Registration Law, which required PNDC approval to begin a new movement and required trustees to submit accounts for annual auditing.

Despite current difficulties, however, the movements have been successful in integrating Christian religious expression with traditional elements such as the use of talismans and amulets, fortune telling, incantations, song and drumming. "In the process of this syncretism, members experience some feeling of continuity and develop a sense of identity with the past"
Mbon considers this a crucial relationship in contemporary Nigeria, where cultural revival is increasingly seen as a significant factor in national development (as it is in Ghana). It may be in the best interests of health workers and planners to carefully explore this relationship -- the indigenous forms documented in this thesis are seen as a beginning.

Compatible reinforcement

The broad issue of parental responsibility is a sensitive one that is currently being addressed in Ghana by the Ministry of Health, by traditional councils, and by the press. The rise in teenage pregnancies and their association with the decline in puberty rites has been discussed in chapter 4. The issue of a male parent disowning a pregnancy and/or abandoning a child has been addressed by Oppong (1987) and was on the agenda of the traditional council meeting I attended in Winneba. The slow adoption of family planning has been the concern of the Ministry of Health, the Ghana National Family Planning Program, the National Council on Women and Development, and various donor agencies, such as the International Planned Parent Federation. Ghana adopted a comprehensive population policy in 1969, which recognized the effects of unregulated population growth. It

The government's current cultural policy proclaims: "The attainment of the objectives of self-reliance, the re-shaping of our national identity and the restoration of our self image will continue to elude us until our culture becomes the basis of all our policies -- educational, social, political, or economic", p. 2.
predicted that "unless birth rates can be brought down to parallel falling death rates, Ghana's population will climb at a rate dangerous to continued prosperity, and the children of the next few generations will be born into a world where their very numbers may condemn them to life-long poverty" (T-Vietta, 1989). At the time, the population growth rate was three per cent. At current growth rates, the country's population will reach 20 million by the year 2000, an increase of six million over 10 years ("Rapid population," 1989).

Considerable effort is being made to increase the prevalence of contraceptives use, which remains at 8-10 per cent nationally. Songs on family planning have been recorded and distributed on cassette to taxi drivers to use in their vehicles, and market women have been recruited to add contraceptive devices to their kiosk inventories. Although the supply and distribution of contraceptives has often been sporadic, particularly in rural areas, there is still the need to reinforce positive messages regarding the acceptability of family planning. Dr. Edwin Quaynor, director of health services for the Central Region, stressed the need for "constant public education" on family planning and maternal and child health in the region, noting the importance of the communication/education component to motivate and encourage the use of family planning services. He said the

5Globally, a population growth rate of more than 2 per cent is considered high. Population remains stable with two children per family, but with five or more it doubles in less than a generation.
availability of contraceptive services alone could not achieve positive results, and he appealed to regional family planning committee members to formulate an action plan that would include "enlightened" people outside the Ministry of Health ("Help motivate", 1989).

The variety of indigenous communication forms detailed in chapter 4, as well as the lessons learned from the experiences in Botswana, Sierra Leone and Tanzania deserve attention in such an action plan. For instance, one of the reasons given for the limited success of the popular theatre experiment in Botswana was the lack of an "institutional framework" for the performances; once they were over, they were over. In the Winneba environment, festivals like Akwanbo, which run for a set period of time and which focus on community improvements, provide a seasonal framework. Likewise, the rejuvenation of puberty rites, even in a modified form, provides a particular circumstance to frame educational messages directed at young women. The messages, such as those that advocate birth spacing and the responsibility of parenthood, would be communicated by the adziwa women, skilled, as were the Tanzanian women, in the "etiquette of communication."

Such topics may run counter to long-standing habit and custom, where a common frame of reference -- what Mody calls "an identity of meaning" -- between parties should be a prime consideration. Reddi (1989) has described the process as "establishing commonness" between the sender and receiver of messages. Such shared meaning is
... concerned not only with the meaning but with the context of meaning in any given set of messages, rather than messages as discrete entities and understandable only in relation to each other. In the Indian system the stress was on meaning and interpretation, on who is the source of the message, the motives of the source, and on the philosophical framework within which the message was embedded (p. 399).

Such identification is often made easier when the medium used is one that is known, accepted, and trusted. Research conducted around the SITE experiments in India found that local folk forms were more appropriate than documentary ones when issues such as caste, dowry and child marriage were discussed. In some cases they were actually safer, as those who spoke out on these issues were exposed to threats of violence. To cope with the problem, one production team developed a style of presentation called "false illusion," whereby a real situation was taped up to an acceptable point, then folk media were incorporated.

The idea is that what is shown is reality, but it is presented as illusion or fiction. In this method, the false/reality is presented through drama, puppets, satirical skits and traditional folk forms...

The extensive use of folk forms to convey developmental messages... and the creation of the genre of false illusion are probably two of the most significant original contributions to Indian TV (Berrigan, 1979, p. 38).

Accessibility, credibility, even safety are all important factors to consider when choosing communication forms to support development activity. Additional strengths of the indigenous forms discussed here lie in their presentation (and the

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6The SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) studies document a series of innovative programming experiments conducted in India in the mid-seventies.
audience's reaction to and identification with that presentation) and in their ability to reinforce a message design strategy that appreciates and uses indigenous knowledge to persuade and to teach. These strengths are detailed below.

The power of performance

It will be useful here to consider presentation as performance, in the sense intended by Bauman (1977). Such presentation involves, on the part of the presenter (performer), an accountability to an audience for the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content. It assumes responsibility for a display of communicative competence. Such competency is a sign of good breeding in Akan society, and good speaking and oral presentation skills are highly valued. Yankah (1989) points out that good speaking involves more than just words; gestures and comportment are equally important. Children are trained in the social rules governing communication, and "communicative etiquette" is passed on from elders to young people. It is significant that Yankah uses this phrase, (one so similar to that used by Shoeffel in her Papua New Guinea study) as its importance in social interaction needs to be understood.7 Throughout the period of field work, I was impressed with the emphasis placed on decorum, on propriety, on behavior appropriate to the occasion. These were observed in

7It was a lack of training and preparation in the "etiquette of communication" that made health care workers in Schoeffel's study so uncomfortable.
the ceremony surrounding the opening of the health post at Buduatta, as described in chapter 4, but were not so readily seen in the relationships between health care workers and their clientele in more mundane circumstances. This relationship will be examined more closely in the conclusions to this chapter.

When a performance is compelling, it binds the audience in a relationship of dependence that keeps them caught up in the display. Thus the appeal of the asafo companies, who can hold the attention of an audience for several hours on a hot day, even though the content of their songs is well known. This appeal is enhanced by the skill of the drummers and the competence of the women dancing, so that the event is a multi-media one. As well, the colors, patterns, and designs on the women's cloth communicate, so that a message encoded in song may also be drummed, and given visual expression through cloth.⁸

Control over an audience is also an attribute of the speaker who uses proverbs, linking known symbols and beliefs with new information he or she may be advancing. The proverb may constitute the nucleus of the discourse or particular themes may attract proverbs. Such themes range from ordinary conversation to debate, argument, "and other situations where traditional rhetoric is judged relevant in changing, modifying or reinforcing attitudes" (Yankah, 1989, p. 251).

Yankah points out that because communicative competence is highly valued, it is constantly evaluated. A good speaker is

⁸See Endnote 2.
judged by the efficacy of the imagery used, its appropriateness
to the context of the social situation or subject under
discussion, and his skill in articulation. The proverbs he
cites in his comprehensive study show the sublety of expressed
wisdom, the sophisticated level of audience appreciation, and the
ability of an experienced proverb-user "to tie a knot around the
argument," (p. 24) so that its persuasiveness is enhanced. Two
examples used successfully in judicial proceedings are included
in the Endnotes to this chapter.

Yankah is careful to point out, however, that appreciation
of the performance on the part of an audience does not
automatically translate into acceptance of the message. The
proverb augments and validates; it affirms a viewpoint. It
reinforces an argument, foregrounding it (as Penfield noted in
her study of Igbo "quoting behavior") and making it more
conspicuous. But the power of proverb rhetoric cannot be
divorced from the message or argument it is used to embellish.
The message itself, then, needs equal attention.

Sharing meaning through message design

The proverb used in the title of this chapter -- "the plant
in the courtyard is not a medicine"-- is a Kannada one from
southern India referring to the practice of overlooking the

9Despite his use of the masculine pronoun, Yankah includes
women in his discussion of communicative competence. He recalls
that the first Asante royal spokesperson was a woman, points out
that women are equally as witty in speech as men, and includes
many proverbs with female authors in his collection.
efficacy of what is close at hand. It was used by Nichter (1991) as a point of entry for examining indigenous health behavior, the "common sense" upon which it is based, and the lack of attention health educators often pay to a strategy that is available and familiar -- using analogy to design messages. Such an approach attempts to ensure a greater degree of meaning sharing, as advocated by Mody and Obeng-Quaidoo (chapter 2).

Conducting research on the anthropology of health in India, Nichter and Nichter (1986) observed the methods used by popular communicators and gained an appreciation of the effective use these people made of metaphor and analogy. They observed the enthusiastic response of audiences to religious leaders when they juxtaposed the themes of traditional mythology and a popular movie to emphasize a moral principle. They noted how the traditional ayurvedic practitioners explained the relationship of body humor by reference to the sun, wind, and rain, and contrasted this technique, and the audience reaction to it, to the monologues and didactic approach being used by nutrition educators. The former had the advantage of introducing new information into a context of existing cognitive associations, experiences and concerns.\footnote{The lack of such a context may have been part of the problem articulated by Welsch (1986) regarding the PHC model in Papua New Guinea -- "the people never listen."} The Nichters identified the concept of "balance" as an important one associated with health and well-being and learned that the rice field is widely used as a referential framework,
e.g. a growing child is often likened to a budding rice stalk. They then introduced the analogy that the need for a balance of the right kinds of fertilizer in the field is like the need for a balance of the right kinds of food in the stomach. Messages were developed, incorporating local proverbs, that countered the growing idea that consuming tonics is a better investment of scarce resources than investing in a better, balanced diet. Although a tonic can help a person feel better quickly, it is of little use over the long term:

To wait until you are ill and then run for tonic expecting it to give you health, is like supplying your field with urea at the time of harvest or when your crop looks weak. Should one wait until thirsty to start digging the well? (1986, p. 69).

Similar "points of convergence" might be identified and used in messages designed to tackle various problems faced by the health team in Winneba district. According to the officer in charge of communicable diseases, one of these is that parents often give priority to farming and fishing activities over their own or their family’s health and seek out treatment only when a disease has progressed. An example is yaws, a contagious skin disease prevalent in the area. Many parents believe that yaws should not be treated until it is "mature," and they hide an infected child when the health worker comes. The tendency not to follow through on a series of treatments has been mentioned earlier (as has the hiding), and this relates not only to immunization but to treatment for yaws and bilharzia as well. Parents, according to the officer, must learn to recognize the appropriate time to seek treatment and to realize that health
care is their responsibility and not the health worker’s.

In terms of message design, the metaphor identified by Nichter holds several possibilities to help parents internalize the concepts of prevention and maintenance. They should not wait "until they are thirsty," i.e., until the yaws are mature or until the symptoms of a disease become pronounced, before seeking alleviation. By following through on the full sequence of immunization, i.e., "digging the well," they are insuring themselves against future disaster.

This concept of being prepared is one that was expressed to me metaphorically by a woman explaining puberty rites :"When you build your house on sand, it easily collapses." The rites are part of the preparation to ensure a stable marriage.

Other cognitive associations that need to be identified and built on include:

* One action precipitates another, relating to mothers’ tendencies to begin weaning too soon, which stops breast milk from flowing; and weaning with the wrong foods, which inhibits growth.

* What is appropriate for one age level or level of maturation is inappropriate for another, e.g. cocoanut water is a good thirst-quencher for adults, but it is no substitute for breast milk for babies. Several proverbs quoted by Yankah (1989) clearly define the limits between childhood and adulthood and the corresponding expectations. One often heard in Winneba is, "What a child sees standing up, a man sees sitting down."
Things that are good and worth having often require inconvenience and discomfort to attain, e.g. a swelling or redness after a vaccination that may cause the baby some discomfort; a pregnant mother who deliberately does not eat as much as she should in order to have a smaller baby, because a larger one may mean a more difficult delivery. Applicable in the latter case is "Childbirth is not a kente cloth, to be bought and worn."

Prestige and authority carry corresponding obligations. According to Yankah (1989), an elder loses respect if he defaults on responsible behavior. Such responsibility is depicted in the proverb, "When the elder eats like a glutton, he washes his own dish." Men, as head of their households, should ensure that all its members are well fed.

Certainly attitudes and practices will be more difficult to influence in some areas than others, e.g. family planning. A large family is the norm in Ghana, as in most African societies, and there is still considerable stigma attached to childlessness and infertility. At naming ceremonies, schnapps is often poured under the father's stool to signify virility, and prayers may be offered for the newborn to have "thirty children" to carry on the lineage (Yankah, 1992).

Identifying points of convergence is an important part of the research approach advocated by Buck, Kincaid, Nichter and Nichter (1983) in an examination of the cultural context of development communication. Such an approach would explore
rhetorical styles and referential frameworks, seeking to identify key metaphors and analogies useful in "conceptual translation."
The goal of work such as the Nichters is to reach mutual understanding between groups -- to share meaning.

**Strategies for the future**

This thesis has documented some of the indigenous communication forms in Winneba which hold potential for health educators looking to broaden their coverage of the community and to communicate to its members in a culturally meaningful way. Although time and resources did not allow for a complete inventory, the field work has revealed areas for future investigation. One of these is mbran, young men between the ages of 18 and 35 who are leaders of their age group in their families. They meet with the family heads on matters affecting their group, particularly on controversial issues, or something the young people might "kick against." Since this is the group being encouraged by health and family planning officers to take a more active and responsible role in fatherhood and parenting, an exploration of their current function might provide clues for future planning.

A second group ripe for future investigation includes the

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11Information on mbran came from interviews with two family heads in Winneba on February 2 and February 14, 1990.

12Yeboah-Afari (1986) reports the success of a "Daddies Club" in the Western Region, encouraged by the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana.
traditional healers, fetish priests, and spiritualist prophets. All of these are consulted on matters of health and well-being, and their responses affect how the health care system is used. Areas of complementarity, as well as those of conflict, need to be explored to find the threads most suitable for weaving into current programs.

The groups, settings, and communication forms that have been identified here form an integral part of community life and seasonal activities, and virtually all are performance-related and draw on recognized local talents and creativity. This aspect seems particularly important in relation to health care. Health, according to Lihamba (1986) is at the centre of most African traditional performances, whether of a religious or secular nature.

Performances can be categorised as concerned with the maintenance of community and individual health, with the prevention of ill health, with the restoration of health and with instilling survival knowledge and skills to ensure healthy continuity of society. . .

Harvest festivals celebrate the successful conclusion of a cycle that ensures the survival of the community; they are also an affirmation of the health of the society and the economic activities basic to its existence. Where practised, the initiation ceremonies of girls and boys incorporate performances that highlight hygiene, nutrition, sexual education and skills related to the mode of production (p. 35).

Such an identification of compatible settings, combined with an understanding of the role of proverbs in enhancing speech and strengthening persuasion, and of the role of metaphor and analogy in aiding comprehension and learning should help planners formulate creative strategies that combine both old and new elements. Recent reports from West Africa, however, show this
approach is not being readily adopted. Okunna (1992), in an exploratory study of communication strategies in the Better Life for Rural Women Program in Anambra state, Nigeria, found an urgent need for a move away from mass media concentration, including televised jingles and extensive coverage of the state governor's wife's promotion of the program. Obeng-Quaidoo (1991), examining the dissemination of information to four Ghanaian communities included in a UNDP environmental project, found much of the material inappropriate to the target population in terms of language, cultural setting and form (including printed leaflets for an illiterate audience and films made in Britain).

An exception is a case study documented by Coyle (1992) which compared oral narratives to picture flannel graphs to determine which would be more effective in an agricultural development project in Sierra Leone. The results found more support than expected for the appeal (and recall) of the visual presentations on rice harvesting, although the most effective presentations combined the two. The stories, however, were created in English, translated into the local language, and presented by extension workers. Coyle draws attention to the considerable "contextual noise" that resulted from having the agricultural agents, rather than local story-tellers, make the presentations.

There seems to have been little follow-up from the work of Fiofori, who worked with indigenous story-tellers in Rivers state
in Nigeria 20 years ago. Fiofori analyzed a number of existing stories for content and meaning, selected six, and together with the narrators incorporated family planning information into them. The narrators then told the revised stories in situations which allowed for audience participation and response.

Before being exposed to the stories, men and women were interviewed to gather information on their awareness of and attitudes towards both traditional and modern methods of family planning and whether or not they were practising any form of birth control. After hearing the stories several times over a six-week period, they were interviewed again. Preliminary results showed considerable attitude change.

Two other Nigerians, Pratt and Pratt (1987) recommended such a format for communicating nutrition information to rural West Africans. They advocated training local residents skilled in drama and proverb use to incorporate nutritional messages into their repertoires. These could then be performed on appropriate occasions. The authors believe their model is more compatible with the communication networks found in African societies than the classical diffusion one, which relies on an "expert" source to dispense information; they urged researchers to work towards the pragmatic application of their model in nutrition, agriculture and population education.

However, much of the recent research has been directed

13Opubor, who found researchers' efforts in this area wanting (see chapter 1), considered Fiofori's a ground-breaking study.
towards improving and expanding the communication skills of field workers, such as the agricultural extension agents in Coyle's study, or those of health care workers, such as recent efforts in Ghana to improve the "sensitivity skills" of nurses and midwives in family planning clinics. The professionals who have the knowledge and information to dispense are seen as capable of learning effective communication skills and are encouraged to do so. But little attention is paid to the non-professionals skilled in communication practices, who may be equally as capable of adding or adapting health care information to their repertoires. Manoff (1985) has summed up the situation with regard to nutritionists:

Nutrition educators have labored on their own for too long, over-burdened by the professional demands of the communicator. They cannot be their own best communicator, any more than communicators can be their own best nutritionists (p. 13).

Co-operation and collaboration could enrich and enhance the knowledge and skills of both groups.

Frustration with the lack of a joint approach was expressed to me by Efo Mawugbe, the director of the Central Region's cultural centres. Although story-tellers, a proverb specialist, and a drama and puppetry troupe were available as a "communications team," they were not asked to contribute when

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Focus group discussions held in several regions revealed potential and actual clinic users found the service providers rude and insensitive. As a result, the Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins University Population Communication Services, followed up with counselling training for some 5,000 health care workers.
health education campaigns were being planned. The only request from the Ministry of Health was to ask for a dancing or drumming troupe for after-dinner entertainment.

What are the prospects for integrating these non-professionals into health education programs? Can institutional structures, such as the ministries of health and community development, recognize and appreciate the communication resources communities such as Winneba have to offer? Or are they hindered by factors such as the "big-man small-boy" syndrome suggested by Price (1974), whereby their status as professionals and bureaucrats creates an effective barrier to broadening community and social interaction? 16

Professional values

Price's provocative article provides a departure point for a consideration of factors that could affect the implementation of a collaborative approach to health care. Following a study of Ghanaian bureaucracy, Price concluded that status differentiation is a pervasive aspect of Ghanaian life, and that an institutionalized pattern of expected behavior exists between individuals of unequal status. Such a combination of cultural

15 In an interview with Mr. Mawugbe in October, 1989, he revealed that he was not aware of a family planning program set to begin in the region the following January.

16 The terms "big man" and "small boy" are a common part of speech in both Ghana and Nigeria. During my stay in Winneba, I was asked to vet final examinations for the School of Communication Studies at Legon. When I told this to a teacher at the ATTC, his response was: "You are not small."
expectations and beliefs influences the relationship between those providing public service and those on the receiving end. The demand for deference on the part of those in authority, and the willingness of those affected to give it, is a prevalent aspect of this relationship. Price suggests this behavior relating to authority roles was characteristic of an indigenous sociopolitical system where chiefs and elders were greatly respected while they held their official positions and that the colonial experience reinforced an already existing pattern. Such a "cultural syndrome" weakens the effectiveness of programs that involve direct contact between bureaucrats and clients.

It is difficult to assess Price's comments in relation to situations observed in Winneba -- certainly there were instances of those in authority "pulling rank," especially at the MCH clinic. Nurses were observed shouting at a mother for not undressing her child fast enough or scolding a mother if the child was found to be underweight or had lost weight since the previous visit. Their response to a mute boy of about eight who came regularly to watch was to shout at him and drive him away.

Comments were made to me that the women were too "lazy" to prepare the proper foods or too busy doing business to care for their children. Their failure to show up at the clinic was attributed to "unenlightened" attitudes which prevented them from taking advantage of the opportunity provided.

Yet Price's comments may be related to a growing body of evidence on professional socialization, which affects the
effectiveness of PHC teams in the community (Boerma, 1987; Rispel and Schneider, 1991; Oakley, 1991). Boerma notes the most difficult task a PHC team has to learn is the reorientation towards teamwork.

... it appears the higher the medical profession and the higher the level of technical knowledge, the lower the interest in participatory teamwork or in PHC in general, which is considered second-rate care (p. 749).

In a study of the professionalization of nursing in South Africa, Rispel and Schneider point out clearly delineated levels of authority and the negative effects that professionalism has had on the provision of health care:

In the same way that professional education appears to educate physicians into attitudes of formality and arrogance, nursing education socializes nurses into attitudes of authoritarianism and victim-blaming toward communities and patients (p. 122).

Efforts at re-educating and re-orienting health staff toward community involvement were found largely ineffective in a WHO document on strengthening district health systems. "Although workers have been trained and can repeat the 'right' words, their basic attitudes and resistance towards community participation remains unchanged" (Oakley, 1991). The report also noted that district medical officers and their teams often do not appreciate the value of community participation and are not sufficiently motivated to facilitate and support community involvement.

All professions may be seen, as Bernard Shaw described them, as "a conspiracy against the laity." Certainly standards of practice remove bodies of knowledge from the community, and professionals are often reluctant to share them for fear of
jeopardizing their authority. Such has been the attitude of Western-trained doctors towards indigenous healers in many African countries (Ademuwagun, 1979; Pearce, 1982; Pillsbury, 1982). Pearce's study showed that although Nigerian physicians were interested in learning about indigenous psychiatric practices and herbal remedies, they were reluctant to engage in any formal co-operation. "When doctors feel that any group is encroaching on their turf, attempts will be made to control the competition" (p.1616).

Professionals also identify themselves with organized occupational groups and are sensitive to any restructuring that might threaten their control. Bennell (1982) describes a "slavish adherence" to international standards of professional education and practice in Ghana. He reports how a certificate course for pharmaceutical dispensers was seen as "lowering of standards" by the Pharmaceutical Society of Ghana, who subsequently worked to have it abolished.

In Winneba, however, as in all the regions in Ghana now, there exists an organization that might function as a facilitator between indigenous communicators and the health team. The Centre for National Culture will be examined in that context.

**Catalysts for change?**

The Centre is one of seven in the Central Region and one of more than 100 in the country. A National Commission for Culture, created by the PNDC in 1989 as part of a revamping of cultural
policy, oversees the centres. The government’s attention to cultural policy may be seen as a recognition of UNESCO’s declaration of the World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-97). According to the UNESCO document:

The recognition by the international community of the need to place culture at the centre of development is already beginning, though not yet widely, to be reflected in practical terms. . . . In most cases, economic, social, and scientific policies continue to be pursued independently of cultural policies, with scant regard for interrelationships or potential complementarity (p. 18)

. . . the process of modernisation takes on its real meaning only if it establishes a new balance between the factors of change and the demands for continuity (p 20).

Under the leadership of a cultural officer, the centres have a mandate to explore the cultural potential of their communities and determine the most effective means of harnessing them to support economic, social and political development. Community associations and groups are to be sought out and consulted, and local art and communication forms (music, dance, drama, poetry, proverbs and masquerades) are encouraged and promoted. One of the objectives of the Winneba office for 1989-90 was "to use the cultural media in raising the level of national awareness among both the literate and illiterate population through educational activities." The centre’s program included music festivals, dance and drama performances, proverb and riddle contests, as well as preparations for the New Year’s masquerade and Aboakyer. A documentation room was being set up to include information on local customs regarding marriage, divorce, religious practices, and chieftancy nominations, as well as data on musical instruments, songs, dance forms and performers. The centres can
be likened to the "institutes for the translation of tradition" recommended by Katz (1977).

The success of the centres in carrying out their mandate will depend in large part on the relationships established between centre staff and their various communities of interest -- local artists and performers, traditional council members and family heads, as well as educators and the community at large. As for the latter, there is some indication that the purpose and priorities of the centres are being recognized,17 despite their relatively recent establishment.

In Winneba district, the cultural officer's background as a musician, his personality, and his skills as a negotiator hold promise for ongoing co-operation. An ambitious program of activities was underway in 1989-90, which included local dramatic support for a literacy campaign. The cultural officer was also a judge for the district cultural competition, where students compete in singing, drumming, dancing, poetry recitals and dramatic presentations, individually and in groups. Encouraging such links with the schools was seen as an important part of the centre's work, and cultural studies teachers were assisted whenever possible. During my stay, the cultural officer was tutoring a group of young boys on the atenteben, a traditional bamboo flute. He was also included in meetings of the traditional

17 In an address to cultural workers in Winneba in September, 1989, the director for the Central Region said his office had received numerous complaints from people who were concerned with the proliferation of video houses screening objectionable material, e.g. "Culture people, what are you doing about this?"
council, where he was seated at the front with members of the executive; he was actively involved in the planning of Aboakyer events and the New Year's masquerade.

Could the Winneba cultural centre establish an effective liaison with the district health team? Could it function as a facilitator, matching local communicators with health team members to work towards some of the team’s priorities, e.g. providing additional input into the health education program and reinforcing existing information? For this to happen, there must be a willingness to co-operate and a mutual respect for each other’s knowledge and skills. The challenge for the cultural officers lies in confronting the values and attitudes that the professional class has acquired towards traditional cultural forms, acquired over generations of colonial education and missionary activity. There is a perception among this sector that the centres engage in "uncivilized activities," and aspects of local culture are equated with fetishism and paganism.\(^\text{18}\)

This discomfort with the traditional milieu was revealed to me during the New Year’s School in Winneba in January, 1990. The School is an annual event, held at different venues around the country and organized by the Institute of Adult Education at

\(^{18}\)Interview with Mr. Ernest Awuley, cultural officer for Winneba district, October 3, 1989. His view was reinforced in a conversation with Kwaw Ansah, a Ghanaian film producer, in Halifax in July, 1992. As a member of the National Commission on Culture charged with drawing up a cultural policy for the country, Mr. Ansah recalled how some members of the Commission "almost came to fisticuffs" over the inclusion of the recognition of traditional religions in the policy.
the University of Ghana. Educators and representatives from various government departments -- Social Welfare, Community Development -- gathered for a week to hold discussions and workshops on the chosen theme, "Population, Literacy, and Development." Two of the sessions combined the use of participatory research and drama, and participants visited a village near Winneba (Gyangyandze) to learn about its organization and problems, then worked out a verbal script with the villagers about a market woman who was duped out of her money because she couldn’t read or keep accounts. However, when they returned to the conference site to perform the play for their peers at the plenary session, several of the participants refused to take part because they did not want to play rural villagers, shouting in Fante. The emotive and exaggerated gestures called for in the script were not considered appropriate to their status. The result was that the lone oburoni (foreigner) had to don a cloth and headtie and play an additional part which was unacceptable to the others.19

Such resistance to indigenous cultural forms must be acknowledged. In order for health care workers and planners to engage local resources, they must learn to recognize the value of traditional performance. They must also be willing to work with the cultural centres and the performers to develop and/or appropriate songs, stories, and proverbs that fit specific

19Conversation with Sandy Arkhurst, a participant from the School of Performing Arts at Legon, after the performance.
objectives, and they must come to appreciate the performers as potential educators. Collaboration between the two groups would go a long way towards building the "horizontal partnerships" between health institutions and communities advocated by Aubel (1992). Health personnel, accustomed to the role of "message sender," would become facilitators, sharing information with the community to gradually increase their understanding of each other's knowledge and priorities.

In a paper presented to a symposium on indigenous knowledge and sustainable development held in the Phillipines in 1992, Mundy and Compton concluded:

Development strategies should integrate indigenous knowledge and communication systems. Indigenous specialists should not be regarded as paraprofessional aides to exogenous professionals, but as experts in their own right. They should be tapped as expert consultants to advise in the planning and implementation of development efforts (p. 20).

Conclusions

This thesis has documented a variety of indigenous communication forms and settings that are current and popular in Winneba district. They engage local people, and they are locally controlled. They have the capacity to provide the kind of learning opportunities envisaged by Grossman (1990) for health education. Such education is "not selling, preaching, directing, or fooling -- it will not be accomplished in isolated minutes at the conclusion of a consultation or a picture show in a crowded hallway" (p. 60). Rather, it will occur when it is related to perceived priorities of everyday life, when it is ongoing -- from
*Akwambo* through New Year’s to *nde* and *Aboakyer* -- and when it is reinforced through culturally-appropriate forms.

To be long-term and sustaining, however, such a process needs to become institutionalized. Here barriers identified by Hornik (1992) need to be considered. Political motivation is one; an intervention needs sustained interest and sustained capability, backed by sufficient human and financial resources. The current political climate in Ghana is uncertain; whether institutes such as the Centres for National Culture survive and/or prosper remains to be seen. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held in November and December, 1992, in an acrimonious atmosphere. Rawlings and his party emerged victorious only because major opposition parties boycotted the election, and the current parliamentary opposition is an artificial one. The beginning of the Fourth Republic was not auspicious and predictions for stability are bleak (*Easy victory*, 1993).

In addition, it must be stressed that although decentralization is the government’s stated objective, such distribution of authority is not easily accomplished. Authentic participation, "though widely espoused and championed in the literature," is not in everyone’s interest (*Servaes and Arnst*, 1993). Institutional resistance to popular participation is a

20 According to a report on Rawlings’ inauguration, the high point of the day for many spectators was his first appearance in public wearing *kente* cloth. He was cheered for his proper handling of the heavy material, in contrast to a televised appearance from Nigeria some years ago, where his fumbling with the cloth received considerable criticism at home (*"Enter the Fourth,"* 1993).
reality and is as prevalent in the community as it is in
government bureaucracies. In a report on the significance of
indigenous knowledge in song among aboriginal women in central
Australia, Ellis and Barwick (1989) recalled how they had been
asked by the women to help them improve their lot through the
knowledge they had gained of their songs. Over 25 years, however,
little has been achieved. The authors concluded that the women's
modes of knowledge "do not sit well with European institutional
practices" (p. 38).

A further barrier to institutionalization is that the role
of communication in ministries such as health is often not a
priority, particularly in times of fiscal restraint. In Ghana
currently, the restraint is severe. In the maternal and child
health and family planning sector alone, the government finances
only 10 per cent of projected annual requirements. Another 40 per
cent is provided through donor support, including UNFPA, UNICEF,
World Bank, WHO, USAID, CIDA, IPPF, and others. Taking all
sources of funding into account, (government, community, and
donors), there is still a shortfall of approximately 50 per cent
between what is available and projected national requirements.

The opportunity for broadening communication at the
grassroots and for encouraging community participation, heralded
during the early Rawlings years, may be in jeopardy. Some

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21 Appropriations for the 1993 financial year show the amount
budgeted for general administration at Korle Bu Hospital in Accra
exceeds the figure for health education by more than C100,000.

suggestions as to how community leaders, NGOs and donor agencies might proceed are made in the concluding chapter. Predictions for success, however, should be tempered by the wisdom of a relevant proverb: "He who constructs a path, knows not it's crooked behind him" (Yankah, 1989, p. 53).

Endnotes
1. Colle notes a study in Kathmandu that sent simulated clients from different castes to family planning clinics. The study concluded that the accuracy and completeness of the information, as well as the manner in which it was delivered, was influenced by the clinic workers' perceptions of the clients' status. Scanty, less accurate information was given to unsophisticated, lower class clients who lacked the skills to elicit information themselves. Often, they left the clinic without sufficient information to make a decision or without understanding the contraceptive method they had decided to use. The study concluded that the manner in which information was provided was liable to drive clients away.

2. Although cloth as a communication form was not part of the scope of this paper, its use as such has been documented. There are more than 50 adinkra designs alone, representing animate and inanimate objects, and abstract symbols of proverbs (Warren, 1986). The leg of a fowl, for example, is the symbol of a parent or guardian who is strict in dealing with children without being
cruel to them. It represents the proverb: "A hen may tread upon her chicks but does not kill them."

Traditional designs have been complemented by those relating more directly to current lifestyles. Kreutz (1987) reports the popularity of environmental designs printed on cloth in Niger, e.g. colorful vegetables to promote off-season gardening. In Nigeria, when the national association of nurses and midwives launched a campaign opposing female circumcision and scarification, a chief designed a dress with a decorative motif of tatoos. By wearing the dress, women could symbolize their entry into womanhood without having to endure the actual tattooing and scarring (Supriya, 1991).

3. Yankah quotes the following proverb used during a judicial arbitration:

If you tie a headload of squirrels
To unload on Gyebi,
And you don’t find him,
The burden remains on you.

(Your efforts have been misdirected, and in vain, and you must suffer the consequences).

During the case, just as a jury member began: "It’s the elders that spoke the proverb. . ." the audience joined in to recite it, nodding their heads in agreement. The speaker’s viewpoint was clearly deciphered by the audience, so much so that verbal cues triggering the proverb were anticipated in advance.

In a second case, a jury member used a proverb to depict the defendant’s hypocrisy:
You behave like the purifying fly,
Your short legs cannot reach the river's base;
You would have stirred dirt.

The image is that of a fly, hovering over rivers, and believed to be a purifying agent. Yet according to the proverb, the fly dispenses this community service only because of a natural handicap -- its legs are so short it cannot reach bottom. If it could, it would stir up dirt and make the water impure. The defendant, according to the speaker, had behaved like the fly, professing good intentions but concealing malice. The proverb received much comment afterwards; its aesthetic appeal stemmed from its articulate performance, suitability to the context, and intrinsic poetic value.
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The approach taken in this thesis is what Eilers and Oepen (1991) call an ethnocommunication one -- examining local resources, cultural conditions and cultural expression. In Winneba district, dance, drumming, songs and proverbs are part of daily life and social activity -- to study them in isolation as discrete media forms or communication channels might add to a body of ethnographic knowledge, but would be of little use in determining their potential as development support. What is important is the relationships -- of proverb to occasion, of song to dance, of asafo member to festival. Such relationships are a reflection of social structure, social processes and social values. These values are not often understood by or readily revealed to outsiders, whether they be researchers, representatives of donor agencies, or government extension agents. As Victor Turner reported following ethnological studies in Zambia, it is one thing

. . . to observe people performing the stylized gestures and singing the cryptic songs of ritual performances and quite another to reach an adequate understanding of what the movement and words mean to them (Turner, in Eilers, 1991, p. 306)

Such an understanding is crucial when determining the fit between development initiatives and local communities, yet it is an area that has not often been pursued by communication researchers. Eilers (1991) recommends that no development project should be started without a thorough feasibility study which includes the consideration of a given value system, as only
then can such projects and related communication efforts take root in a people’s culture.

Geertz (1983) has compared an understanding of indigenous people’s "inner lives" to "grasping a proverb;" Obeng-Quaidoo (1985) has drawn researchers’ attention to the importance of meaning sharing between communicators and audiences -- a sharing of assumptions, beliefs and values.

As a corollary then, communicators and educators working toward better health care practices in Winneba district would need to be deepen their understanding of their constituency. They would need to determine the perceptions men and women have of themselves as individuals, and as part of family, clan and community. They would need to identify attitudes towards competition and co-operation, equality and hierarchy, authority and group affiliation. They would also need to identify people’s relationship to the natural world, to material things, and to time. Finally, forms of social relations including community mores (regarding marriage, divorce, reproduction and inheritance) would need to be understood, as well as the nature and extent of obligation, and the rules and protocols governing interpersonal relationships.

With an understanding of these cultural components, the application of convergence theory would seem appropriate. In

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1This framework for determining cultural values has been adapted from Brownlee (1978).

2This theory, advocated by Buck et al. (1983) and Nichter and Nichter (1986), was introduced in chapter 6.
accordance with a convergence approach, the flow of information between professionals and lay persons needs to be negotiated, a process that requires an understanding of rhetorical styles, when, how, and by whom they are used, as well as appropriate forms of conceptual representation.

Many of the professional health care workers in Winneba are not outsiders; they are (primarily) women from the district or region who have adopted the values and attitudes of the professional class to which they now belong. They are, as the women described by Schoeffel in Papua New Guinea, uncomfortable with the traditional "etiquette" of communication. Thus a considerable amount of negotiation would be involved if meaning is to be shared. Their effectiveness as participants in this process would depend on their ability to be patient, flexible and tolerant, and to work with local people, e.g. to invite adziwa groups to perform at the Tuesday baby clinics (on their turf) and to encourage groups in the district to reinforce health care messages when they are not present.

With the will and the motivation, their ability to conceptually translate information regarding nutrition or child care may be realized. These women have some familiarity with local referential frameworks, and with the metaphors expressed in songs and proverbs. They may well be able to work with adziwa women to determine a variety of metaphors and analogies relating to preventive medicine and maintenance of good health, following the examples of cognitive associations suggested in chapter 6 (p.
Their capacity to do so, however, will depend to a large extent on how much autonomy they have in determining their own methods and practices at the district and community level. In this regard, an encouraging sign was given recently when the budget director at the Ministry of Health announced that from January, 1994, district level management teams would administer health budgets as part of the decentralization process. According to the director, all administrative responsibilities will shift from the regional offices to the districts by 1995 (Health budget, 1994).

In the best case scenario, the health team would be granted the local autonomy it needs to develop creative approaches to health education; in the worst, it could simply become overburdened by additional paper work.

The immediate need is for training in group process and team building skills as advocated by Nair and White (1987). Health care workers need to be weaned away from feeling threatened by input from the community, to being intrigued by the notion that local communication "experts" have talents and knowledge to offer. Rapport, mutual respect and trust is needed to establish a partnership, a process that will require considerable patience over the long term. However, support could be sought from other ministries at the local level, e.g. community development.

Examining the role of the community health worker, Oakley (1989) went only so far as to find it "interesting to speculate" on what
would happen to training for these people "if the whole participatory element were taken out of the hands of the medical service and made the responsibility of the community development or adult education services" (p. 50).

Another player to be considered in Winneba is the district Centre for National Culture. As noted in chapter 6, the centres were established around the country as part of the government's policy to ensure that the development process "reflects a conscious recognition of the force of culture on the economic and political aspects of nation building." The concept of Sankofa "affirms the co-existence of the past and the future in the present."³

The policy is to be expressed through the preservation, promotion and presentation of culture, the agents for these being traditional religious and chieftancy institutions, asafo companies, voluntary associations and craft guilds. It is also to be expressed through the establishment of linkages with various sectors, such as health and agriculture, to create an awareness of the cultural dimensions of their planning and policies. It would seem then that a structure is in place to ensure that the cultural component in national planning and programming is recognized.

However, attention has been drawn earlier in this thesis to the frustration expressed by the director of the cultural centres in the Central Region at not being consulted in discussions of

³From the preamble to Cultural Policy of Ghana, nd.
program planning. According to him, the Ministry of Health continues to work in isolation and has not yet come to understand or accept the benefits of liaison and co-operation. The resources available through the centres are requested only when a drama or dance troupe is required for after-dinner entertainment. In his view, the centres will not be able to come into their own and carry out their mandate until public perceptions of the role of the centres change and until there is more co-ordinated and integrated planning among ministries.

Given these current realities, initiatives outside the official and parastatal structures also need to be considered. In the Fourth Republic, former revolutionary organs -- such as the December 31st Women's Movement, the CDRs and young people's Mobisquads -- function as indigenous NGOs. The women's movement in Winneba, in particular, encompasses women from a variety of occupations and backgrounds including farmers and fishermongers, seamstresses and hairdressers, teachers and nurses, and queen mothers and district assembly members. They are engaged in a number of income-generating activities, as well as in literacy training and in promoting the national child survival and development initiative.

Such a group seems to meet the criteria suggested by Nyoni

4 Although these women sit on local traditional councils, they are not yet represented on the regional council of chiefs. The December 31st Women's Movement is lobbying for their inclusion, although one informant told me: "The men are afraid of their power; if they get in they might take over." It is the queen mother who nominates and presents a candidate for chieftaincy.
(1987) for effective NGO action. Group members are open to influence from their supporters, they understand local needs and problems, and they have the creativity and talent to develop appropriate and relevant solutions to those needs and problems. The group structure is accessible and participatory.

In Winneba, the head of the women's movement was planning a series of meetings with women in the district to discuss the reactivation of puberty rites in an adapted form, i.e. to be held over a shorter time period and with less cost. Such meetings could provide a comfortable environment for developing an inventory of songs, proverbs, idioms and riddles relating to marriage, reproduction and parenthood and planning the most effective venues for their performance, e.g. during the rites, and during the Akwanbo festival.

Options exist for improving the communication component of health care education in Winneba district, for encouraging local input and benefitting from local expertise. However, it may take an outside agency to provide the initial impetus and encourage collaboration among the players. UNICEF comes to mind, as it has an established presence in the region, and has built up networks and affiliations over time. Discussions with project officers promoting primary health care and the expanded program of immunization could provide a fruitful first step towards community collaboration and grassroots participation in health care activities.
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