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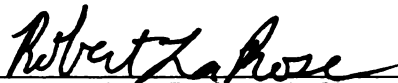
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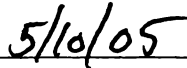
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**COUNSELING BY TELEPHONE AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION IN
SUPPORT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

By

Wesley Rotary Smith

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

COUNSELING BY TELEPHONE AS A FORM OF COMMUNICATION IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

By

Wesley Rotary Smith

In the effort to support the human development and advance the empowerment of those in developing countries, this thesis outlines the steps necessary to implement telephone crisis intervention counseling call centers and information and referral services for the Third World. In the effort to do so, the effective use of telephone counseling in the highly developed regions of the world is examined and telephone counseling is defined. Both implementation barriers and implementation bolstering factors from the developing world are discussed. Finally, a section of this thesis has been used to present an implementation process that can be put into use in any country with functioning telecommunications infrastructure.

This implementation process contains elements from the fifty years of telephone counseling in developed world, as well as being informed by an intensive interview with an experienced practitioner in the field of consulting for a development firm with experience from several projects throughout the global South.

**To the children of Rafah, Gaza Strip, the Occupied Palestinian
Territories and for the memory of Rachel and Tom.**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my most sincere appreciation to everyone who offered me support, guidance, motivation, inspiration, encouragement, patience, and kindness throughout the process of producing this document. Without the loving help and wisdom of these people I would be nowhere.

I thank the mentors, professors, and staff who ushered me through my programs, especially Drs Marvel Lang, Robert LaRose, Nicole Ellison, Mohammed Ayoob, Richard Thomas, and Bernard Finifter. I extend my every good wish to Dr Bella Mody who took me under her wing inside the classroom and over Masala Dosas. There are not adequate words to describe my gratitude for all the care and advice given to me by Anna (Fran) Fowler. All my thanks to Andy, Colleen, and Nicolas who would read anything I wrote; I am in your debt.

For my family, my friends, my brothers, the staff of The Listening Ear and The Michigan Peace Team, my pen pal, my dogs, and all others who have kept me smiling, you mean everything to me. I thank my family for their love, my friends for filling my life with the music of laughter, and my colleagues for continuing to amaze me with their dedication. Your contributions have made me who I am.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION ONE

Introduction.....	6
Method.....	14
Instruments.....	15
Procedures.....	15

SECTION TWO

Telephone Counseling in the Developed World.....	16
A History of the Use of Telephone Counseling.....	16
Effectiveness of Counseling by Telephone.....	23

SECTION THREE

Barriers to Telephone Counseling in the Developing World.....	27
Telephone Access as a Barrier.....	31
Cultural Barriers.....	35

SECTION FOUR

Implementation Bolstering Factors.....	47
TCIC as a Communication Process.....	48
The Benefits of Telephone Use.....	54

SECTION FIVE

Call Center Implementation in Developing Countries.....	58
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SECTION SIX

Conclusion.....	71
-----------------	----

APPENDICES.....	79
-----------------	----

REFERENCES.....	85
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SECTION ONE

Introduction

From the time we are small children we are socialized to feel sympathy for the people suffering from underdevelopment in far off places around the globe. Who cannot recall the motherly request to eat Brussels sprouts being framed around those unfortunate children starving in China or Ethiopia? Who is unfamiliar with advertisements calling on us to save a sick child's life for the price of a cup of coffee a day? These messages strike a sour chord because poverty and starvation of such intensity seem less than human to most of us. The sad truth is that preventable disease is the most prodigious killer of the world's children and hunger is the everyday condition for billions of people (UNDP, 2003). People in rich countries can continue to feel upset, eat their vegetables, and donate their spare change, but it has long been understood that sustainable human development requires more thoughtful strategies.

Underdevelopment is not a flashflood. This problem has not sneaked up on the world. Early conquests in the name of exploration, colonization, and eventually evangelical missionary work had always sought to civilize the savages (Harris, 1997). The United States stepped to the world stage initially hoping to foster economic

development in poor countries where miserable conditions, continuing unchecked, might allow communism to flourish (Mody, 2003).

Communication strategies were first applied to development initiatives in the form of propagandistic messages designed to inspire changes in “social attitudes and economic practices and relationships” in hopes of enhancing economic development sufficiently to modernize developing nations (Mody, 2003, 8). The communication paradigm of modernization has been labeled propaganda because underlying its guidelines for economic development for all were messages about “specific cultural, economic, and political practices” that represented a desire to limit communism’s spread (Mody, 2003). The results of the modernization model of development were disappointing but valuable lessons were learned.

While there is no denying that economic development and human development go hand-in-hand; the single focus on economic growth as the path to development was not working. Rethinking the importance of “people-oriented development” led to the new paradigm of Development Support Communication (Wilkins, 2000, 40). Whereas modernization viewed communication as a factor capable of altering people’s behaviors to favor quick economic growth, this new paradigm visualized “communication as a support for self-determination of people” (Wilkins, 2000, 40). This new focus rests on the assumption

that an empowered people are more capable of the kind of social change needed to produce improvements in sustainable human development which, in turn, produce sustainable economic growth.

At issue in the earliest attempt at using mass communication for development was the fact that such initiatives often overlooked the people whom were to benefit, and, as such, alienated them adding another burden to the already difficult task of fostering economic development. The strength of empowerment is that it holds the key to bringing new voices into the development dialogue. Development has been shown to affect men and women differently (Wilkins, 2000). Indeed, it affects different racial and ethnic groups, as well as different religious groups unevenly. Empowering these previously overlooked groups of people can only strengthen attempts at development. It has come to be thought that racial, gender, and religious equality will not be the byproduct of economic development, but rather, they are the vital ingredients for healthy and sustainable development (Wilkins, 2000).

The forms that development support communication projects can take are limited only by the imaginations of those who seek to implement new projects. The form suggested here is both well known in developed countries and reinforces the vision to use communication for empowerment. Counseling by telephone, often referred to as

Telephone Crisis-Intervention Counseling (TCIC), has been successfully and effectively practiced throughout the wealthiest countries of the world for decades (Lester, 1977). It covers every imaginable problem area and has been guided by the principle that people are capable of solving any crisis, given access to the appropriate resources (Training Manual, 2001).

In the developed world the use of counseling by telephone has been shown to be appropriate for myriad applications, and its accessible placement and empowering characteristics are complimentary to the reconfiguring of communication initiatives in support of human development. It is the purpose of this thesis to make the case for the implementation of TCIC in the underdeveloped countries of the world as a form of communication in support of sustainable human development. To do so it is necessary to conceptually define "human development" as a term. Reading this document it is crucial to understand that "human development is about people, about expanding their choices to live full, creative lives with freedom and dignity" (UNDP, 2003, 28). Human development uses people as the unit of analysis and focuses on any individual's quality of life. This represents a paradigm shift from economic development and its use of a nation's gross domestic product as the unit of analysis with fast economic growth as its focus.

The quality of life that is fundamental to human development comprises four elements: living a long and healthy life, being educated, having a decent standard of living, and enjoying political and civil freedoms (UNDP, 2003). These elements may seem amorphous but they may be measured in terms of factors that can be addressed by TCIC services. For example, gauging human development gains in terms of living a long and healthy life may be measured by citing reductions in child mortality, improvements in maternal health, and efforts to combat major diseases (UNDP, 2003). Education can be looked at in terms of achieving universal primary education, or the promotion of racial and gender equality and empowerment (UNDP, 2003, 28). By focusing on reducing poverty and hunger one could affect improvements in the standard of living for developing countries (UNDP, 2003). Political and civil freedoms might be demonstrated by measuring the presence or absence of avenues for political participation available per country and which types of people (by race, gender, class, religion, ethnic grouping, etc.) utilize that access. Conceptualizing human development thusly illuminates a litany of ways that TCIC could be implemented (see Appendix A for examples).

It is projected that a population empowered to take ownership of their country's sustainable development will better enforce

environmentally reasonable policies than disaffected agencies of governments or international agencies (UNDP, 2003). In the global South, where most people do not interact with government, it is especially crucial that they have alternative methods to seek help and information resources. The proposal to implement counseling by telephone in support of development does not suggest that it will stand alone and have positive effects. Instead, one should imagine a variety of development resources connected by networks of aid and relief agencies and accessible through telephone counseling and referral services with access to valuable information and extensive databases placing callers in contact with the services that best fit their particular needs. In the developed world, one is never more than a phone call away from the necessary resources to take the initial steps toward dealing with any circumstance. A similar situation for the people of the developing world would have dramatic impact on fostering the empowerment of the population needed to bolster human development.

There are many factors that weigh in on the practicality of implementing such a development initiative. As a point of departure, this thesis begins by examining the history of counseling by telephone in the United States from its initial and limited attempts to its present state of universal penetration and acceptance. Any application of

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telephone counseling in the developing world will be able to build on this foundation and benefit from the lessons acquired over more than fifty years of practice in the countries of high development.

Taking the discussion fully into the realm of the developing world, the state of human development (or the reality of the consequences of underdevelopment) is introduced, paying close attention to the ways in which telephone counseling could offer relief. However simple it may be to highlight the need for such a development initiative, it is important to realize the barriers that exist in the global South that stand in the way of the effective implementation of telephone counseling services. While the foremost impediment to implementation is the low level of telephone penetration, there also exist several other barriers stemming from differences that exist between the developed and developing nations. These differences are labeled “cultural barriers” and include such limiting factors as resistance to new technology, negative attitudes toward help-seeking, and inequality in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and religion.

In the attempt to answer the serious questions raised by these potential barriers, an examination of the factors that enhance the likelihood of successful usage of telephone counseling in support of development follows. The traits of telephone counseling that act to

lower barriers are discussed along with an introduction of the welcoming characteristics of telephone use. The unique communication process utilized by telephone counseling, combined with the positive attributes of telephone use are shown as capable of addressing the cultural and access barriers against implementation.

A final section segues from the constraining and energizing factors of the process to implement telephone counseling as a communication application in support of human development to a practical guide for accomplishing such an implementation. Constructing this guide applied a variety of methodologies that included histories and literature review as well as the evaluation of a practitioner from the world of international development consulting. The resulting model represents an amalgam of knowledge representing not only what is known from theory but also that invaluable insight that can only come from experience. That said, it must be noted that this list is not intended to be thought of as exhaustive. Rather, it provides a basic outline within which country-specific information can be added. By adding a section that explicitly lays out the necessary steps in the procedure, the practicality of telephone use for counseling is further demonstrated.

Method

The method of data collection for this project was comprised of an intensive interview. Selection of an appropriate sample was a delicate process. In order to strengthen the development proposal, it was necessary to interview an experienced practitioner in the field. To ensure protection of the anonymity of the study's participant, a general description will now be given of this individual's occupation. The respondent was selected from a non-governmental consulting firm that supervises and implements projects for sustainable economic growth and human development throughout the developing world. This firm has successfully sought bids and received grants to promote development projects on every continent. The firm currently has projects underway in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, North Africa and the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and the Far East.

The participant's experience includes supervising projects in Bosnia, Sarajevo, Argentina, and Morocco. A major part of this individual's career has involved the implementation of third world development projects, which made for a perfect match with the needs of this intensive interview. The respondent consented to voluntarily participate in this study and was in no way compensated for joining the study. Knowledge of the participant's identity was limited to the author and three committee members, and throughout the remainder

of this thesis the respondent will be referred to by the pseudonym Parker Speedland.

Instruments

Parker Speedland was first given a draft of the thesis' proposed development project and asked to read it carefully. Next the same information was presented in an abbreviated form, resembling a checklist of sorts. What followed was a series of reflection questions that Parker Speedland was asked to respond to. These questions related to the respondent's perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. After reading the complete section and the abbreviated checklist, Parker Speedland was able to give an informed evaluation of the practicality and completeness, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed idea. The questions were designed to be open-ended and were intended to inspire qualitative responses that would potentially help the organization and framework that led to the development proposal, as well as acting to supplement the data collected through reviewing literature.

Procedures

The respondent was recruited online after a survey of websites limited the recruitment pool to a short list of qualified firms.

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Recruitment emails were sent and consent obtained before the respondent received the interview questionnaire via electronic mail. The instrument of data collection was intended to be completed by the respondent in one hour. The finished version of this thesis' development proposal has been redrafted to include the insights gleaned from the interview data and includes quotations from the respondent that have been cited under the pseudonym Parker Speedland.

SECTION TWO

Telephone Counseling in the Developed World

A History of the Use of Telephone Counseling

That the telephone is a powerful tool that has had a substantial effect on the developed world is hardly a debatable point. Use of telephones has profoundly altered the way we work; the ways in which we interact within networks of our families and acquaintances; it has helped shape consumeristic behaviors; facilitated closing gaps in international dialogue; it has increased the speed and effectiveness of first responders in emergency situations; and has even revolutionized the communication methods required to wage and win wars. From the perspective of uses and gratifications, a person's use of the telephone

can be “explained in terms of its ability to gratify psychological and social needs” (Sawhney and Barnett, 4,1998). The telephone has, for example, forever changed the ways we seek help and information in times of need. In most cases, telephone use has resulted in increased efficiency, which can be considered a positive effect. From quickly summoning police officers or firefighters to phoning-in restaurant reservations, telephones make life easier.

Some would say that the depersonalization associated with communication via the telephone has accelerated what Ferdinand Tonnies referred to as the *Gesellschaft* (DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach, 1989). In this theory, mass society emerges, having been facilitated by social bonds based around impersonal contracts. This bleak scenario was conceptualized long before Alexander Graham Bell’s fortunate mishap, but such ideas have had an impact on the way mass communication is perceived. One could speculate and research endlessly on the social impact of the telephone over time, but in the realm of prosocial media effects, it is clear that the application of telephones to counseling has been improving communities for decades (Lester, 1977).

Counseling by telephone has a unique history and followed an unlikely path in arriving at the present state of its widespread and effective use. This is a history that begins in the heat of the Second

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World War. Enlisted fighting men suffering from combat fatigue (what we now refer to as post-traumatic stress disorder) needed short term counseling delivered immediately to regain for themselves the stability needed for the front lines (Parad & Parad, 1990). What resulted was the preliminary incarnation of Crisis Intervention Counseling, then called B.E.P. or brief emergency psychotherapy. At this stage, the services were delivered by licensed counselors who set only a few short appointments with their patients while the crisis was occurring, usually in a hospital setting.

The next step in the evolutionary process of Crisis Counseling came with the opening of The Trouble-Shooting Clinic at Elmhurst City Hospital in New York (Parad & Parad, 1990). This walk-in clinic was the first offering of twenty-four hour, psychiatric emergency services in the United States. This development highlighted the fact that people experience very serious problems outside of a nine-to-five, Monday through Friday timeframe. Out of necessity, the introduction of the telephone into this unique counseling model would soon follow (Parad & Parad, 1990).

Certain problems are highly time sensitive and call for responses with an immediacy that may not even allow a trip to the hospital as a viable option. More practical in these situations was a telephone answered by a trained counselor. The first application of telephone

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counseling was a suicide hotline and in 1958, the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center (LASPC) was opened. The second area where telephone use and counseling were combined was in poison control information centers, and from these two pioneering call centers would eventually come thousands more in virtually every community in the developed world (Lester, 1977). It is at this stage in the development of Crisis Counseling is where the history of telephone counseling really begins.

Implementing telephone use for the purposes of counseling people in such serious states was not an easy process. One of the first hurdles to overcome was convincing the counseling community that therapeutic integrity could be maintained when the interaction was mediated by the telephone (Lester, 1977). At this time, professional counselors manned all hotlines, so it was not the paradigm of crisis intervention counseling that was coming into question, it was the new technology. Fifty years ago, as today, there existed "the tendency to find fault and make dire predictions as any new technology is introduced" (Gackebach, 1998, 123). Many professionals doubted that the value of therapy by phone could compare with counseling in a face-to-face environment. Another major consideration was how the services would be received by the public.

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In 1958, when the LASPC became operational it was not known if people would incorporate use of the telephone into their help-seeking behaviors. There are other formal and informal networks that (although not as expert) are often sought first when one experiences crisis. At the time there was skepticism over whether an unseen stranger at the other end of a telephone line could compete with one's family, friends, church, co-workers, or local public resources (Lester, 1977). Suicide prevention centers seemed a needed development in spite of this doubt, however, as rates of suicide had been drastically increasing during the 1950s (Parad & Parad, 1990).

By 1966, call volume at suicide prevention centers was growing substantially enough for a seemingly drastic measure to be considered. In the face of serious concerns and strong resistance from the community of professional counselors, it was proposed that non-professional volunteers could be introduced as Phone Call Answerers (PCAs) in suicide prevention centers (Parad & Parad, 1990). Indeed, this modification to the model, more than any other factor, has made telephone counseling as we know it today possible. All the initial questions about the feasibility of counseling by telephone were very quickly answered in the affirmative. The mediated counseling was, in fact, effective; people were willing to use technology for help-seeking, and non-professionals proved to be competent under proper and strict

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selection, training, and supervision. All that remained was the experience necessary to discover areas for improving and tweaking the programs.

With telephone counseling, as with any fledgling program, there was an initial period of trial and error, vast success and major overhauls, evaluation and pragmatic evolution, and policy analysis that has led to the services we have today. Before even launching the LASPC there was a four-year period of research and preparation, and yet the call center was still simply an experiment, nothing more than a work in progress. Within the service's first five years it had switched from providing services forty hours per business week to the year-round, twenty-four hour coverage that has become the standard model (Parad & Parad, 1990). Within a decade of the implementation of telephone crisis centers in the United States, there were thousands of call centers operating in most major urban areas and expanding into many other communities as well.

The early lessons learned by the LASPC paved the way for other SPCs throughout the country, but the implications of counseling by phone had now surpassed the realm of suicide prevention. The Los Angeles experience provided a flexible model that could be applied nationwide in communities of different sizes, and providing myriad services (Palmatier, 1998). Within a single decade, telephone

counseling exploded from a few small, unknown and isolated suicide counseling centers and poison control hotlines to a large, recognized, nationwide network of service providers that responded to many community needs. From suicide call centers sprang depression and teen hotlines. From poison control centers came drug and alcohol overdose and addiction hotlines. Abuse, runaway, and rape hotlines became common, as did a closely related type of service known as information and referral (I&R) call centers that could aid underserved demographic groups such as the elderly, teenagers, and people with disabilities (Palmatier, 1998). I&R services call centers, which are often incorporated in telephone counseling services, act as a middleman between community members and the public resources that are available to them. In this way many people who don't know where to turn are given concrete leads quickly and effectively (Training Manual, 2001).

Effectiveness of Counseling by Telephone

Although the road was rough and strewn with many pitfalls, it was those early, hard lessons that have enabled counseling by telephone to develop into the success it has become. Now, approaching a half century since its first use, telephone counseling in the United States is almost universally available, widely used, cost-effective, empowering to the communities it serves, enduring, and

extremely versatile (Lester, 2002). These achievements notwithstanding, there are several areas which, over the years, have proven to call for constant improvement such as increasing awareness, deconstructing taboos, and reaching those demographic groups that are at the most risk.

In terms of access to services, the United States boasts an impressive network of agencies that cover nearly its entire population. The same can be said of Canada, Europe, and other highly developed areas throughout the world. Anyone with a telephone can easily reach out to any of several nation-wide, toll-free call centers and, in most areas, there exist extensive local services as well. This enables an enormous amount of people to enjoy the benefits of crisis counseling and information services at nearly no cost to them. Whereas the incredible cost of health care and the inconvenience of scheduling time to utilize health care services poses a barrier to millions, the low cost and ready availability of functional equivalents provided by telephone services opens up doors in a way that empowers underserved populations such as the poor, the young, and those living far from away from service providers. As will be demonstrated, there are several other characteristics of such services, which are derived from the use of telephones, which empower callers as well. Speaking to the enduring viability of these programs, it is now several decades after

the inception of counseling by telephone and the number of call centers that persist from year to year remains steady while new services continue to be added (Rosenfield, 1997).

One of the most striking features of telephonic counseling is the incredible range of topics and services that are put within reach of users. Inspired by initial successes, a "bandwagon" effect has occurred in crisis intervention resulting in its use for an ever-widening ring of applications (Parad, 1974, 5). This manner of counseling is now considered appropriate for those ongoing issues in society, such as depression or runaway children, as well as for short-term problems that spring up unexpectedly, such as flash floods or disease outbreaks. Information referral services can be a point of entry to connect people with general aid in finding resources for any crisis, or can themselves be providers of extensive knowledge on specific topics or for specific groups. These referral services act to connect the vast and versatile chain of call centers and community resources that people may or may not be aware of. In this way, a caller's initial crisis (say, homelessness) is not needlessly exacerbated by his or her not realizing that the resources are readily available within that person's community (perhaps a variety of charitable organizations, homeless shelters, food, clothing, health, and employment aid services) and all reachable from any phone booth. It is often the case that finding help is the

overshadowing crisis of a problem that can effectively be dealt with once counselors put callers in touch with the appropriate aid organization or governmental program (Training Manual, 2001). This is a phenomenon that reminds us that even with successful programs there may be room for improvement.

Although many people enjoy the services provided by telephone counseling, there are scores of others that could benefit from such services but are unaware that they exist. A major issue of the field is increasing awareness and marketing these services as options for first-time callers (Parad & Parad, 1990). Such issues have faced those in the field since its very first days and persist in posing challenges as new call centers and hotlines continue to arise. Early evaluations of telephone counseling services in the United Kingdom quickly determined that “publicity should be directed” toward those groups of people who “*fail* to make contact, in the hope of changing their beliefs” (Rutter’s emphasis) (Rutter, 1987, 27). This has been a constant battle and one that must be fought on multiple fronts. Aside from simply raising awareness of the call centers and all they have to offer, the issues dealt with and topics discussed also require special treatment to ensure that people will feel that seeking outside help is appropriate.

Here there is the challenge to attempt a more delicate form of social marketing. In many cases there are deeply held taboos within a society that prevent people in crisis from seeking help. For crisis counseling by telephone to function at its peak capacity these social taboos need to be deconstructed so that people feel comfortable enough to speak out. Combating these perceptions is another issue that has plagued crisis counseling since its inception. Initially, discussing suicide was unheard of, but over time it has lost some of its shock value (Parad & Parad, 1990). Even as this has happened, new taboos have come and gone, while others have persisted. Some that carry commonly held myths and call for social marketing to deconstruct taboos have been HIV/AIDS, abortion, mental health, depression, and illiteracy. To this short list could be added many more. For callers to utilize telephone counseling, they must feel safe and comfortable in doing so. While these may become more palatable over time it can be assured that new issues will come into the social consciousness as hot potatoes and forbidden topics.

Related to these unspeakable topics are the groups who needlessly suffer from them. It has proven most difficult for telephone counseling to reach those who are in most need of help. However, target marketing of certain hard-to-reach groups could improve the reach of telephone counseling services. Whether it is retired white

males, poor persons who speak Spanish, or teen-age women with eating disorders, at times it is the case that those in critical need of help do not receive that help. Improved agency between call centers to this end can only increase the effectiveness of telephone counseling. By raising awareness in general, especially in those areas that people will be apprehensive in discussing, and specifically targeting at-risk or underserved populations, telephone counseling could be an even greater gift to the communities it serves. Furthermore, it could offer hope of increased human development to the majority of the communities of the world: those that are still in the process of development in the global South.

SECTION THREE

Barriers to Telephone Counseling in the Developing World

It has been observed that paradigm shifts are occurring across the landscapes of development and mass communication. The concepts of international economic development and development communication aimed at modernization have been largely supplanted by those of international human development and development support communication aimed at improving quality of life for those billions of people in the global South. The notion now prevails that sustainable economic development must be achieved as a byproduct of

human development, but this presents the imposing “chicken or egg?” question that stymies many attempts at truly reforming the ways in which we allocate development aid (Graham, 1997). If it is given that economic development is more sustainable when attempted in areas of high human development, how can that set of issues be addressed before impoverished regions improve economically? This question represents a puzzling dilemma fraught with vexing complexities. One proffered means of working past this roadblock is through development support communication, one example being counseling by telephone.

Telephone counseling could be of great benefit to a large section of human development issues. There are several obvious areas that come to mind. Call centers in the developed world that focus on disease outbreaks, suicide, drug and alcohol addiction, family matters, and reproductive health issues provide a model that may be transferable to those areas slowly climbing in the direction of development. All these issues are present in the global South. Indeed, most of them are drastically worse there. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the developing world is at best a cause for concern, usually alarming, and sadly has reached pandemic proportions in several countries (UNDP, 2003). Harsh living conditions contribute to heavy prevalence of social pathogens including suicide, addiction, and

abuse, and these display a pejorative trend (UNDP, 2003).

Furthermore, reproductive health is at issue much more amidst the mushrooming populations of the global South than it is in the developed world. Women throughout the developing world are several hundred times more likely to suffer a reproduction-related death than their sisters in the North (Gallin, et al., 1989).

Other fairly obvious areas whereby telephone counseling could energize human development efforts are the realms of general and focused I&R services. The sometimes-labeled Third World could benefit from increases in the availability of relevant information for specific demographic groups and about a wide range of topics. Perhaps the elderly need a general helpline, or teens need a sexual health information call center, or perhaps yet women need a resource for legal or marital advising. Again, existing, successful models from the developed world could pave the way for Southern services.

Counseling by telephone can also be used to support development in ways that are not necessary in most developed countries. While security issues now seem to be highly salient to even the safest countries, the effort at advancing human development in the Third World countries is often hindered by violent conflict, whether from tensions between ethnic or religious groups, resulting from political unrest, or at the hands of a foreign aggressor (UNDP, 2003).

This represents an opportunity to expand the use of telephone counseling services in a way that would be particularly useful in counteracting what has become a major obstacle to development. Among the types of telephone counseling normally thought of, such services are rare, although not without precedent. For a brief list of possible TCIC uses in the developing world consult Appendix A at the end of this document.

Although services such as these offer hope for producing positive effects on the efforts toward human development, there are several potential barriers to successful implementation and effective start-up. Before implementation of such services is possible, it is important to recognize and discuss the obstacles. The first type of barrier to consider will need to be that of access; after all, to persons not able to use a phone at all, the potential benefit of telephone counseling is a moot point. Beyond this rather blatant simplification of the discussion of access, there are many more implications that have relevance for any proposal to use telephony in support of development programs. Examined will be the phenomena of uneven access and gaps in access, in terms of urban and rural differences, geographic and market considerations, prohibitive costs, and the uptake of new technology. Aside from the barriers to implementing telephone counseling that relate to concerns over access, there are several other potential

stumbling blocks to consider. For the purposes of this discussion, it will be necessary to separate social and cultural barriers from those that relate strictly to access. Among these cultural barriers, issues such as technology acceptance, help seeking behavior, religion, race, class, and gender are considered.

Telephone Access as a Barrier

Access is a very serious issue in the discussion of using information technologies in support of human development. Exactly what type of benefits could be provided by increased access and what kind of roadblocks are in the way of increasing access is a matter of endless speculation and debate. When difficult or technical questions arise it is often the wisest course of action to consult an expert. As it happens, there are very few experts in the field of telecommunications for human development. Were that list to be drafted, the name of Sam Pitroda would be foremost among the non-scholarly practitioners mentioned. Pitroda is an Indian who had a successful career as a telecommunications entrepreneur in the United States of America before returning to the Subcontinent with the hopes of using the telephone as a tool for nation building. In the past decade, he has shifted his focus from India specifically to telecommunications in developing countries. It is his belief, and the belief of many others, that it will be difficult to achieve "sustainable development with

freedom” without proper telecom institutions and infrastructure, and that without development in these areas, three quarters of the world’s population will never know the “civilization of the information age” (Sankar, 1994). He speaks about the issue of access and the gap between rich and poor countries.

One of the major gaps between developed and developing nations is in the access to information technologies, including the telephone. The Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Anan, is all-too-well acquainted with the divides that exist between rich and poor countries in terms of access to food, water, jobs, housing, and health services. He states that, “today, being cut off from basic telecommunications services is a hardship almost as acute as these other deprivations, and may reduce the chances of finding remedies to them” (Norris, 2001). That there is a North-South technology gap should surprise no one. A barrier of similar seriousness, and one that also poses a threat to development, is the presence of gaps within countries.

Technology disparities within countries exist for various reasons. One major incarnation of the access gap within many developing countries is between urban and rural areas. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) publishes an index of telecommunication indicators that break down access on many levels.

While a trend towards greater concentration of technology in urban areas exists throughout the world, even in the most affluent countries, this phenomenon is highly exaggerated in those areas referred to by the ITU as Low Income Countries (ITU, 2002). What this amounts to is that the level of access in much of the developing world is skewed in favor of those living in cities (ITU, 2002). This fact highlights the larger trend of uneven development in terms of urban and rural populations.

The urban-rural gap can result from any of a number of other factors. A developing country's geography, for example, can limit its opportunities for development (UNDP, 2003). Perhaps a country is large and expansive with isolated population centers contributing to uneven access and development. Some developing countries are too mountainous or thickly foliated for development projects to have impact on rural areas. Other countries are prone to natural disasters and harsh weather conditions that deter attempts to increase access. And, of course, there are many areas where lacking infrastructure and adverse geography combine to retard development, such as those places without roads or electricity.

In these areas of least development another problem looms. The urban-rural gap in access and human development threatens to endure by nature of the concurrent urban-rural gap in economic

development. This is a factor that has never been more relevant than it is now with the North-South push to privatize formerly national telecommunications sectors (Thussu, 2000). At present there are market considerations attached to any plans to increase access for poor countries. Private telecommunications companies may be unwilling to invest in areas where small populations or low economic development eliminate the market environment to create substantial profits (Norris, 2000). The high costs of implementing new telecommunications infrastructure may be thought of as prohibitive in such situations. Furthermore, with a majority of markets now opened up to competition worldwide, it may be far more attractive to private companies to wrangle for a piece of large and wealthy markets in areas that have already established high rates of telephone penetration (Thussu, 2000).

It should not be forgotten that low rates of access and shabby telecommunication infrastructure in the developing world were handed down from the often poorly-managed public telecoms at the time of privatization. In fact, a major propelling argument for the push to liberalize international markets was the hope that private companies were capable of running with more efficiency, and the spirit of competition would help bring more and better services to the market with a quickness unheard of for publicly administered programs

(WTDR, 2002). Among these new services, none have done more to increase access and chip away at the technology gap than the introduction of mobile communications into the developing world. The rise of mobile has raised access to communications in an incredibly short time and has seen its sharpest increases in places the ITU refers to as Least Developed Countries (LCDs) (WTDR, 2002). The continuation of the trend toward increased access for developing countries shines a light of hope on the prospect of implementing telephone crisis counseling services for millions of people in need. However, access is not the only barrier to implementation.

Cultural Barriers

It is important to conceptually define the use of the term “culture” in the context of this section. Rather than dealing with aspects that are specific to a group of people (a race, a nationality, a political group, an economic class), the concept of culture here will refer to those general aspects that impact the implementation and usage of telephone counseling services in developing countries. The areas to be introduced and discussed include cultural attitudes toward the acceptance of new technology; attitudes governing help-seeking behavior; religion and development; race, class, and gender considerations; and finally political climates and conditions. While there are assuredly more factors worth studying, and a nuanced

understanding of culture would be instructive to specific countries and groups, such an undertaking is far beyond the scope of this project. The intention here is to present a general overview.

One of the cornerstones of the belief that human development is essential for sustainable development is respect for and understanding of the importance of culture as an element of developing countries. Dealing with certain aspects of culture is also very relevant to the topic of implementing telephone counseling in such societies. This is because some cultural factors present possible barriers to the introduction of new technology-mediated services. For example, even in cases where access to telephones is not an issue there may be culturally held beliefs or practices that prevent individuals from utilizing that access. Consider the beautiful Mediterranean beaches of Gaza City. Palestinian women are not seen lounging in the sun or bathing in the surf because they are expected to conform to gender roles strictly enforced by their traditional culture. At times, no men or children can be found there either because military occupation and forced curfews have become part of their culture.

The use of the telephone as a tool for counseling has thus far been presented sitting on a pedestal. That is, there are many aspects of telephone use for this application that are among its greatest strengths. In some cases, however, those very features pose a

potential weakness. Whereas telephones are a mainstay of developed countries, they are an emerging technology in some developing nations. In such locations it is vital to consider attitudes toward technology acceptance before attempting to launch a development support communication program. Simple access is not always enough. Development failures result when communities are not involved in the design and application of communication technology "in the participatory mode" (Mody, 2003).

In some cases, it is not that phones are unavailable as much as that people do not choose to use them. While telephones could represent a key to progress, they may still be seen in a different light by different cultures. To many, phone availability is unappealing because they are seen as luxury items, not thought of as essential to everyday life, or might simply be a low priority (Sankar, 1994). There are also places where available telephones are just not popular and people do not wish to talk to strangers over the phone (Palmer, 1997). In these places the attitude toward technology use does not seem conducive to the implementation of counseling by telephone at first glance. However, it is worth remembering that telephone counseling in the United States began almost fifty years ago, at a time when main line penetration was not as pervasive as it now has become. Here the social learning theory or Social Cognitive Theory provides the

explanation that “we learn that we can use the telephone to avoid or ameliorate the dire consequences of emergency situations that effect ourselves and our loved ones” (LaRose, 1998, 16). People’s attitudes toward technology are bound to change over time in the developing world as well. “[R]apid economic growth in non-Western societies is leading to local and regional media” that better suits the tastes and attitudes of developing countries (Huntington, 1997, 76). This phenomenon could positively impact cultural attitudes toward the acceptance of new communication technology.

Another cultural factor that applies here is attitude toward seeking help. Even though all people experience crises from time to time, there is no universal set of behaviors that govern how a person should seek help at the time of crisis. Differences in this area have implications for the discussion of telephone counseling. The “psychological cost” of seeking help within societies may be high and for these people “hotlines can serve an extremely important role in crisis intervention” (Gilat, et al., 1998). The cost associated with seeking help can also lead people away from use of relief services. In cases such as this, a cultural “silence” about taboo topics can be created to the detriment of the population (Chandiramani, 1998, 5). Within areas having unfavorable attitudes toward seeking help, or within stigmatized problem areas, anonymity of callers and counselors

may be able to counteract this barrier to uptake of call centers (SEICUS, 2002). Furthermore, it may be highly beneficial to introduce counseling by trained experts in areas with strong family help seeking networks because the seeking of help strictly from peers and family members can contribute to the dissemination of false information (Chandiramani, 1998).

Religion is another aspect of culture that bears on the feasibility of implementing new technology-based human services. Before examining this topic, it is crucial to point out that no attempt is being made to categorize religious beliefs as somehow incompatible with either technology or human development gains. Rather, for development initiatives to be attractive to the countries they are targeting, it is important that they are conceptualized in a way that incorporates respect for traditional cultures. If one considers that development projects flow from the secular cultures of the developed world it is not hard to understand why religion is downplayed. Further, for scholars and practitioners in the West, "our consideration of religion in global dialogue and development is usually absent or negative" because they originate from cultures where spiritual concerns exist as separate from the tangible world (Wilkins, 2000). This is not a separation that exists in most of the world, and especially so in developing countries.

Understanding and harnessing this knowledge to produce new programs informed by culture- and religion-sensitive ideas would go a long way to bolster efforts at establishing successful development initiatives. However, in countries where religion provides the basis for all other aspects of culture, it poses a barrier to development initiatives in the sense that secularly socialized individuals involved in the creation and implementation of communication projects have lacked the sensitivity necessary to capitalize on opportunity (Wilkins, 2000). While some are beginning to recognize and admit this shortfall, there are others who pass the buck and point to religious differences as a bump in the road to development. These are people who have witnessed a resurgence of religions worldwide in the past quarter century, including “the rise of fundamentalist movements” that reinforce not only differences between religions, but also between the developed and developing worlds (Huntington, 1997, 75). Perhaps it is in societies that have seen increased fundamentalism where the need to embrace religion in the push for development is most crucial.

Whereas scholars from the West have tended to give religion the backseat in many fields of study, they have leaped headlong into related areas such as considerations of gender, race, and class as components of culture. For the discussion of development support communication it is of great importance to view these cultural aspects

in such a way as to highlight their role as possible barriers to communication access. Once again, the availability of telephones is only one side of the access picture in any given society, and the availability of telephone counseling will have limited impacts on human development if it is only used by select members of a country based on gender, racial and class groupings.

A major dilemma in development involves trying to use it to generate gender equality. This presents a serious problem because many believe that sustainable development is not even a possibility without the participation of women from the outset (UNDP, 2003). Citing past development attempts that have led to mixed results, the belief has been posited that looking at issues of gender equality as women's issues rather than as development issues has occurred at a cost to development as a whole (Wilkins, 2000). Critics of development's history have noted that in many areas of the developing world, Western "patriarchal values" have themselves led to women's loss of power (Iglitzin, 1976, 186). Women now suffer from underdevelopment at a disproportionate rate throughout most of the world. In the areas of education, poverty and health they are worse off than men across the board and their mortality rates have risen due to discrimination in access to resources (UNDP, 2003). Counseling by

telephone is one way to bridge this gap by supplementing these crucial areas where women suffer needlessly.

Another side of the discussion of gender as a barrier to telephone counseling stems from the fact that culture often imposes strict gender roles in many developing countries. In such areas it is entirely feasible that, given the opportunity, women would utilize such services much more frequently than men would on account of the "cultural fact that men have less legitimation (sic) to express fear and anxiety than women" (Shamai, 1994). At the same time, however, there are strict cultural gender norms that can dictate the expected behaviors of women. In much of the Arab world, for example, a woman's primary support network "continues to be that of family, husband, and children" while men are now less beholden to traditional values (Iglitzin, 1976, 186). It now seems clear that gender considerations will factor considerably on the effort to implement telephone counseling. On the one hand, gender norms may pose a barrier, while at the same time the unique characteristics of help-seeking interactions by anonymous telephone contact could act to loosen the grip of stifling gender roles.

In a similar vein as gender considerations, there are looming racial barriers. The United Nations Development Programme has found that, especially in traditional cultures, a strong divide exists

between racial and ethnic groups both in urbanized and rural areas (UNDP, 2000). Again, this can manifest itself as an outright access to communication issue or as a matter of uneven access to resources resulting from discrimination. When an ethnic group becomes the target of discrimination it can often become saddled with falsely-appointed, negative and stereotypic characteristics that can act to further limit that group's opportunities for development. The reality in most of these cases is that race and ethnicity are not causal factors as much as markers of environmental factors (Palmatier, 1998). In this way of seeing, the causes of ethnic or racial stereotypes are seen in a more accurate light as resulting from class differences. For example, an ethnic group might be more likely to represent a lower economic class. That class may be concentrated in a particular area (say urban/inner city or rural and isolated). Perhaps people from those areas are more likely to represent a certain type of family system (single parent, abusive, many children) and a particular range of educational attainment. All these factors are likely to manifest in behaviors that are then wrongly associated with race or ethnicity as if none of the class-based factors existed.

As far as development support communication projects are concerned, success of development initiatives and attention to class considerations are inseparable. For people in the developing world

"class is created by development and communication" (Wilkins, 2000). Attempts at implementing new development initiatives often overlook the class indicators most relevant to developing populations. For example, lower classes may lack access to communication due to economic conditions. They are more likely to have less free time to devote to seeking access, and less likely to have the necessary level of educational attainment to capitalize on the resources that are available (Wilkins, 2000). New development efforts must consciously avoid the past mistake of targeting the most privileged members of developing countries and engage those who need development assistance most desperately, encouraging them to enter into the dialogue (Norris, 2000). This is simple to pledge but more complex to deliver, though, because economic class barriers to communication access encompass gender based barriers as well as racial and ethnic barriers. Furthermore, class barriers are also affected by another cultural barrier that will be referred to here as political barriers to communication access.

The culture of a country is shaped and impacted by the political climate and conditions that are present there. That a repressive regime can produce a particular culture while a democratic system produces another is a fact that is highlighted repeatedly, in one American news broadcast after another. Development is hampered in

countries under totalitarian rulers due to the fact that in order for efforts at sustainable progress to have success, there must be sincere determination by leaders as well as participation by the population (UNDP, 2000). The barrier to development support communication then arises from poor governance that is unable or unwilling to open up avenues of political participation to the people.

There is an interplay here with other barriers. While in one country the political climate is unfriendly to dissent, and so participation in general is stifled, there are other countries where the class and educational inequality limit a person's ability to join the dialogue, or where gender or racial inequality permit only privileged groups the chance to petition their government (UNDP, 2000). In such circumstances, a push for responsible governance must be coupled with a campaign to politically empower developing populations. However, this process is not guaranteed to work in favor of development projects. Some cultures, and their governing bodies, "feel threatened by the incursions" of Western-centric development initiatives (Rosenau, 1997). Situations such as these heighten the barrier to implementation of development projects to the detriment of underdeveloped areas, but at the same time offer an invitation to rework such projects while gaining valuable insight into improving the perception of human development efforts.

A final political barrier exists in areas where conflict has diminished or destroyed the efforts at making gains in human development. Whether from internal civil wars, racial and ethnic violence, revolutionary uprisings, punitive sanctions, or attacks on sovereignty from foreign aggressors, conflict stands in the way of progress (UNDP, 2000). A sad trend is that those who suffer most are the same people already at high risk from other factors related to underdevelopment (UNDP, 2000). The promising aspect of this barrier lies in the fact that every conflict has a potential resolution, and the outcome of such conflicts sometimes include the creation of new and more responsible governing bodies. Peace is essential for progress in terms of human development.

These barriers, like most others, have but one purpose: to be overcome. Whether it is through increased investment in infrastructure to improve communications access, or through social campaigns aimed at bolstering equality and empowerment, the material and cultural stumbling blocks in the way of development beg for practical and sustainable solutions. Whereas shortfalls in access, whatever their source, present imposing and complex solutions, new and better-informed human development projects can continue attempting to constructively answer these challenges.

SECTION FOUR

Implementation Bolstering Factors

There are several serious barriers to the implementation and use of telephone counseling services for developing nations, but there is also reason to believe that these problems will be dealt with effectively. This optimism stems from the presence of several factors that would lower such barriers and, in fact, could bolster the chances for successful projects aimed at human development. The present conditions in most developing countries include a high occurrence of the type of problems that have traditionally been dealt with by telephone counseling in the developed world, as well as several problem areas that are unique to the global South. This tendency of displaying chronic shortcomings in human development is just one crucial element increasing the demand for services. There are several other factors that actually combat the barriers threatening the success of telephone counseling projects.

The positive characteristics can be separated into two categories: factors related to telephone counseling as a communication process, and factors that arise from the use of telephones. Telephone counseling as a communication process offers the kind of empowering attributes that would be essential to gaining acceptance among people in the developing world. These attributes include telephone counseling

as anonymous, client-controlled, and using active listening. This process has been in place in the developing world for decades and will be referred to as Telephone Crisis Intervention Counseling (TCIC). The factors that specifically deal with TCIC as a telephone-mediated service will focus on those attributes that lower barriers to access.

TCIC as a Communication Process

Communication is a complex process, and it does not become any simpler when people are experiencing some overwhelming problem, or are in an anxiety-producing crisis. Further complicating this process is the fact that some people may feel ashamed or afraid to admit that they are in need of help. Perhaps the problem might concern a topic area that is not acceptable to mention with their supportive networks of family and peers. Their problem could be dismissed as insignificant or silly, or they could be given incorrect information. As discussed, these concerns are especially salient to those in the developing world and present serious barriers to the use of counseling services.

The first aspect of TCIC that lowers barriers to its use is that it implies anonymity. It has been argued that "the most important feature of the telephone" is the "absence of social cues" (Rutter, 1987, 81). The phenomenon of cuelessness leads to many variations of theory that inform the application of telephones to such personal ends

as counseling. Seeds of this concept can be found in the discussion of rich and lean communication or media and when their use is appropriate. Richness or leanness of communication refers to the number of available “channels” through which personal information can be conveyed (Walther, 1996, 7). Face to face communication would be rich, for example, while computer mediated communication would be lean. The telephone is unique in that it rests in the middle of this continuum, which enhances its practicality as a medium to provide counseling.

Speaking to telephone mediated counseling’s relative richness, it is beneficial for counselors to have voice-based communication that offers tonal and emotional input which can both increase the accuracy of the counselor’s assessment and provide a channel for the counselor to present empathetic qualities (Gackenbach, 1998). However, telephones are also a lean medium that creates “perceived anonymity” leading to the disinhibiting effect whereby users “talk more openly and freely about their problems” than they would under other conditions (Gackenbach, 1998, 129). Walther notes that a key effect of this anonymity is that it is especially beneficial for individuals of “low-status” who experience greater freedom to communicate as a result of “optimized self-presentation” (1996). The appropriateness of telephone use for counseling hotlines is made most clear by Rutter’s

explanation. With TCIC, "the whole point of the system is that the telephone *allows* and *encourages* the very psychological proximity and intimate content" possible with rich communication such as face-to-face, however, in this case "it is the *anonymity* which produces psychological proximity" (Rutter's emphasis) (1996).

The feeling of anonymity can be very psychologically rewarding and most call centers maintain that the identities of their callers and the nature of their problems be kept as strictly confidential (Gackenbach, 1998). There are very few exceptions where protocol would dictate that privileged information could not be held in confidence, as when someone's life is at stake (Wright, 1985). Ensuring the caller's anonymity protects against that person feeling threatened, ridiculed, abused, censured, or hurt because of the evaluation of the listener (Pool, 1977). Developing world concerns with help seeking, as well as race, class, and gender inequality could be largely alleviated by the caller never having to disclose that they have used the service. Similarly, taboo topics are more likely to be dealt with through anonymous interaction with a stranger than by utilizing a support network that may punish or humiliate the help seeker, while lacking the knowledge to provide reasoned advice. This is a factor that has never been as important as it is today when so

many are suffering horrible consequences from preventable problems, such as HIV/AIDS and other reproductive health issues.

An anonymous caller would not feel threatened and would be more able to access the help and information resources to improve her/his quality of life (Training Manual, 2001). Perhaps young people could discover how to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections where they would normally remain silent and put themselves at risk. Elderly people could freely express their concerns over depression and failing health. Class, religious, and caste differences would no longer be a barrier to communication. Women would not be subject to the discrimination of exclusion, and men could use their anonymity to lower the psychological cost that is involved with admitting ownership of problems.

Closely related to caller anonymity is a TCIC characteristic known as client control (Pool, 1977). Client control also has strong significance in terms of lowering the cultural barriers to the use of telephone counseling for development. A fairly straightforward concept, client control involves a unique and rare balance of power in counseling interactions that swings in favor of the caller. It is the caller who initiates the counseling interaction, the caller who determines the subject matter of the session, and the caller who can terminate the call at any time. Much like anonymity, client control is a

powerful characteristic of TCIC in terms of fighting cultural barriers. Client control is very empowering to the caller which itself might increase the likelihood of use for TCIC services. Furthermore, client control is especially empowering “for first-time callers who may otherwise not seek counseling” (Pool, 1977, 460). In developing countries everyone would be a first-time caller, and perhaps client control would encourage the acceptance of new technology in new applications.

Another TCIC mainstay is nonjudgmental active listening. Active listening is the set of several basic skills that combine to produce the unique communication process that is utilized by telephone counseling (Lester, 1977). This method of listening is actually as much about responding and interacting as it is about listening. Active listening incorporates paraphrasing, empathizing, self-disclosure, and feedback into a highly effective way of communicating with callers in crisis. This manner of communicating quickly establishes a rapport with callers and helps soften the initial impact felt by those who have no one else to turn to (Training Manual, 2001).

Active listening’s first ingredient is paraphrasing, in which the counselor proves that they understand the nature of the caller’s situation by restating it in his or her own words. Paraphrasing brings many benefits into the counseling interaction including increases in the

accuracy of communication, demonstrating to the caller that the counselor is interested in helping, and setting a tone of mutual understanding for the call (ibid.). Closely related to the skill of paraphrasing are empathy and self-disclosure. Empathy is another way to highlight understanding and TCIC relies on it to label the feelings of the caller in judgment-free terms. In crisis theory, helping someone identify and deal with complicated feelings is the most important way a counselor can facilitate the client's ability to deal with the larger issue (Parad, 1990). By using neutral terms to label feelings, TCIC avoids expressing approval or disapproval, thereby highlighting understanding which encourages callers to continue (Training Manual, 2001). Self-disclosure also deals with the labeling of feelings and fosters a connection with the caller. In a TCIC interaction, self-disclosure occurs when the counselor labels his or her own feelings about what the caller is experiencing, or about a personal experience that is relevant (Training Manual, 2001). Self-disclosure, along with empathy and paraphrasing set the stage by establishing a connection between the counselor and the client that quickly enables the counselor to offer feedback.

Feedback is the last of the main skills comprising active listening. Feedback can be an especially helpful communication tool in crisis situations. It is a nonjudgmental, simple and concise way of

expressing a behavior-effect relationship (Training Manual, 2001). The key to this type of communication is that it does not condemn or blame, but rather it states the relationship in its simplest terms, for example: "When you said/did X, the effect I see is Y." Feedback is the point in the telephone counseling communication process where the counselor can either reinforce or seek to modify behavior without adding any value statements to the intended message (Training Manual, 2001). Together with paraphrasing, empathizing, and the use of self-disclosure, feedback contributes to a powerful and effective communication strategy that is commonly utilized in telephone counseling situations. These communication skills are used to lower as many barriers as possible to potential callers so that they will feel comfortable enough to seek help while they are in the midst of their crisis when "a small amount of effort leads to a maximum amount of lasting response" (Parad, 1974, 304).

The Benefits of Telephone Use

Even if telephone counseling did not offer an unique communication process to bolster its use among the peoples of the developing world, it could still fall back on several other characteristics that lower material and cultural barriers to uptake of new human development programs. These are characteristics that stem directly from the use of telephones for support of development. By utilizing

the telephone, counseling can be offered in a way that maximizes effectiveness in terms of comfort, cost, and even accessibility. It is not a question of whether or not developing nations could benefit from telephone counseling. It is undeniable that such services could provide a great advantage to human development throughout the nations where it is needed most. The question now is whether or not implementation of these helpful services is practical, and if the services offered would be used or if the resource would go to waste.

One way that telephones can improve the chances of counseling services becoming widely used is by making help-seekers feel comfortable. Telephone use is what makes the anonymity and disinhibiting effects of the TCIC communication process possible. The telephone makes people feel comfortable in situations where they might normally feel inhibited because it implies distance (Rosenfield, 1997). When people perceive distance they feel safe and this contributes to lowered inhibitions. This perception is crucial to new telephone counseling services in the developing world, as they will be up against a multitude of limiting barriers. Telephones are also perfect for those least developed areas because very little training or education is required to use the technology, and in cases where human operators are present even functional literacy is unnecessary. Further more, special equipment and services can be obtained to make

the telephone completely barrier free to people with physical disabilities such as the blind and the deaf (Rosenfield, 1997).

Telephone use for the delivery of counseling services to aid human development is also particularly well suited to developing areas because the services can be provided at low cost. In developed countries, TCIC models range from very reasonable to free of charge (Pool, 1977). This is a major mode in which barriers to TCIC use are lowered. The promise of low costs to those in developing countries is only strengthened by the trend of high growth in telephone penetration fueled by investment in mobile telephony. With the cost of increasing mobile infrastructure at a fraction of land line expenses, and with a wider variety of billing schemes, cheap telephone access is becoming available to those in the global South at unheard of speeds (Saez, 2001). This rapid-fire method has not only increased access, but in some countries has changed the way people think about communications (ITU, 2002). Development of this sort bolsters the attempts to harness the telephone as a tool to improve quality of life in developing countries, and the rapidness with which certain technologies are gaining acceptance shows promise for leap-frogging past certain stages.

Just as telephone use can imply distance and create a sense of comfort, it can simultaneously nullify distance and bring people closer

together. This is a characteristic that is of enormous importance for the developing world. Many of the least developed countries are marked by an interplay of vast expanses of land and scarce resources (UNDP, 2003). Situations such as this are tailor-made to be effectively dealt with by telephones. People who might otherwise never have the ability to seek help from a trained counselor would be put in touch with experts without any inconvenience. Even in areas where telephone access is particularly poor, the chances are still very strong that telephones are more nearby than other potential help resources. For example, walking an hour to the nearest telephone kiosk is much more practical than walking several days to the nearest clinic. This represents the other side of the access barrier. In the developing world, universal access is not a prerequisite for telephone counseling projects to be useful and successful.

The fact that telephones can shrink distances opens up many of the cultural and material barriers to TCIC implementation in the developing world. Whereas the costs of traveling distances to clinics, hospitals, or other human development resource centers may be prohibitive to many, a short phone call yielding valuable information represents a much more effective use of time. Furthermore, for persons whose gender, religious, racial, or class group membership might limit their opportunities to travel or publicly seek help, the

resource of telephone counseling would offer them an alternative that would be available at a moment's notice.

Realistically looking at the possibility of implementing human development initiatives in the form of telephone counseling service in the third world, one has to acknowledge the presence of some very serious roadblocks. However, it seems just as realistic to proffer that the characteristics of counseling by telephone would counteract the barriers against its use. No one would say that the majority of humans hailing from a multitude of developing nations represent a monolith. On the contrary, the developing world represents an incredible range of diversity in terms of race, religion, language, and culture. What is more universal are the problems shared by these diverse populations. These problems are faced also by the community of peoples and organizations that seek to improve human development. Shared problems have persisted, and in many instances become worse, in spite of decades of attempts at development aid programs. A shared solution in the form of telephone counseling is now ready to be implemented.

SECTION FIVE

Call Center Implementation in Developing Countries

While overcoming the barriers that stand in the way of implementing telephone counseling is a tall order, there can be no denying that there is as great a need now as ever there has been to address the issue. The proper perspective with which to view any particular attempt at human development (or development support communication, for that matter) is as just one small step in a much larger process of sustainable national development. Doing so quickly reduces such barriers to set of manageable variables within a malleable system. Starting from scratch is never easy, but in the case of counseling by telephone there are more than fifty years of experience to light the way. In this amount of time patterns have emerged and protocols have been put in place in such a way as to maximize the success rates of new call centers. Concurrently, there have been great leaps in both the theory and practice of delivering aid to lesser developed countries and regions of the world. Emerging is a process for implementing telephone counseling services that is adaptable to a wide variety of specialized services as well as general crisis intervention centers and also information and referral hotlines. Adapting this process to fit the needs of the present illuminates the potential for achieving similar successes in the underdeveloped regions of the world.

With the proper process in place it is relatively straightforward to start a telephone counseling call center covering any topic area. This is not to say that the work to be done is easy, but the steps themselves are relatively basic. For those developing nations where cultural barriers loom there would certainly be some very serious and delicate issues to take into consideration, but even here the precedent set by so many developed nations could be instructive if implementers can resist the tendency to reinvent the wheel. The existing, proven method from the developed countries of the world, combined with the experience of practitioners from the field, breaks down the startup of new call centers into a loose progression of steps that encompass a simple and useful model that “can be applied in almost any country with a functioning telecommunications system” (Speedland, 2004).

Among the steps included in the model are the most initial stages where the future call center will plan a statement of purpose and form an implementation management team; the designing of a system of data collection for monitoring and evaluation of the call center; the staffing of the call center; funding, real estate and capital requirements; and the marketing of the new service. While these steps are presented in a chronological fashion, it should be stressed that the ordering of these steps is not necessarily written in stone. The model’s design draws its strength from “its simplicity and

generality" (Speedland, 2004) and rather than prescribing a rigid sequence which could create impediments to a call center's startup a more flexible approach is outlined. However, that much said, the implementation process must begin somewhere.

As has been plainly stated earlier, there are more than enough dire causes of human suffering present in the lesser-developed parts of the world that could be positively impacted through the introduction of telephone counseling services. Matching a call center's services with a "social issue for which there is actual perceived need on the part of civil society" will be the likely first move in any application of the model (Speedland, 2004). Once a problem area has been identified that is deemed actionable and appropriate, a gathering of minds must take place. For thoughtful and effective discussion to take place, a management and implementation team must be assembled. The size and makeup of such a group can vary, but certain essential members would be needed in every case. Included among the required members would be an individual or committee given the managerial power to take action on financial decisions. A public health expert and a telecommunications specialist are also necessary. Again, it may be decided to have small teams or committees of stakeholders in each of these areas. For performing organizational tasks and delegating responsibility a middle manager is

also called for. Next, a human resources manager or staffing specialist is needed. The final key member would be a clinical specialist who could act as a consultant for those areas that require more than administrative attention (Stark, 1994).

To this list could be added several more stakeholders not recognized as vital in the literature. In the effort to present a universal method for implementation, it can not be forgotten that the developing nations of the world comprise an incredibly diverse set. To deal with this reality, the implementation team should also include a native-born consultant who is sensitive to the cultural factors that effect development projects including considerations of race, gender, religion, and class. Perhaps a native lawyer could fill these shoes, especially at the very early stages. Additionally, an individual would need to focus on fundraising. This might mean mobilizing the community members themselves, reaching out to the local and international community of private business and non-profit organizations, and or employing a person with grant seeking and grant writing capabilities. Ideally, as many members of this group as possible would be members of the community that the proposed service would cover. That being the case, there would be the most likelihood that telephone counseling projects would be conceived in a manner with sufficient cultural sensitivity as to attract high interest.

The members of this team would create the atmosphere in which the groundwork for implementation of quality services could begin. For maximum effectiveness this team should also draw its membership from “civil society organizations” such as gender advocacy groups, youth groups, and faith-based organizations; “donor organizations;” and members of “local government” (Speedland, 2004).

Once this implementation team is established it should immediately set out to reach a consensus on the specific purpose of the service. The team should craft a detailed and explicit statement of purpose that covers several key areas (Stark, 1994). Telephone counseling services can be implemented to deal with a wide range of problems, they can be temporary or permanent, they can operate during normal business hours or be continuous, and there are many more variations. It is important for the implementation team to include in their statement of purpose what will be the focus of the services as well as issues that are outside of the scope of the particular service. It will need to be determined at the most initial stages if the service will have a set termination date, such as disease-outbreak call centers or services set up as a resource during natural disasters. The more explicit the statement of purpose, the better the line will be able to address community needs, adequately manage staffing, and avoid

confusion over the appropriateness of roles attributed to the service (Poindexter, 2002).

Another consideration in the statement of purpose should be the establishing of procedures and protocols that will guide the new telephone counseling service. These must include a set of emergency procedures, staffing protocols, evaluation procedures, as well as consent, responsibility, and liability protocols (Stark, 1994). Setting high expectations and adhering to them are important not only to the running of an efficient call center, but also to creating and maintaining a reputation of professionalism within the community. Once the statement of purpose has been drafted, evaluated and agreed upon by the team, the real nuts and bolts work of implementing new services can commence.

Although it is vital that a team of stakeholders is established to draft a document outlining the new telephone counseling project's purpose before anything else is done, the rest of the steps can be attempted in a variety of possible sequences. All the steps are essential but their ordering has some flexibility and will be decided by the implementation team. Where possible and appropriate they can be attempted simultaneously, given that there is sufficient manpower to accomplish all the necessary tasks. There will be no shortage of work to be done.

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A needful and possible next step in the implementation of a telephone counseling service is to design a functioning system for data collection and call tracking. This will be necessary to evaluate call volume and thus inform staffing needs over time (Stark, 1994). This data collection system will also be a tool to monitor the effectiveness of the call center and can be a crucial way to demonstrate how much benefit the community receives from the service. Being able to produce and interpret this information can play a role in procuring new funding and continuing any commitment from established funding sources. Monitoring and logging calls is also of importance in terms of maintaining a well-informed staff. Records from call tracking databases can communicate useful information to counselors such as information on repeat callers or handling suggestions for particular problem areas (Training Manual, 2001). This brings to mind the issue of staffing, which is another needed step in the process of implementing telephone counseling services.

The staffing of a telephone counseling service actually encompasses two required steps: the hiring of staff and the training of hirees. It should be obvious that at some point before the first phone call to a new call center there will need to be quite a few interviews. Potential phone call answerers (PCAs) will need to be screened based on predisposed criteria created by the implementation team. It will be

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essential that proper care be taken to ensure the staffing procedure yields a competent and professional batch of new counselors.

Applicants must meet qualifications, have certain experience, possess the proper attitude, and have the ability to build a rapport with the caller quickly (Conte, 1996). Only those who are up to snuff should proceed past the initial screening to the stage where intensive training takes place.

The training of telephone counselors involves several key components. First and foremost, trainees should be informed of the call center's purpose and socialized in terms of the particular service's protocols. Doing so will prevent confusion down the line and contributes to the call center's ability to maintain its initial integrity. Once that is out of the way, new hires will be indoctrinated into the unique communication process which has been elaborated earlier. Role-playing sessions will allow the trainees to drill and practice this new skill set. Because telephones lack face-to-face qualities, the role-playing exercises should include stressful scenarios that highlight listening skills and sensitivity (Conte, 1996). By mimicking realistic and difficult problem situations on the telephone, trainees will become sensitized to the fact that burnout and strain can occur and will have an opportunity to practice setting personal limits (Boehm, 1991). Of course these role-playing sessions will be conducted and evaluated by

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an experienced training staff who will be able to reinforce appropriate actions or suggest more effective behaviors.

Training manuals and workbooks for such purposes are already in existence throughout the developed world ("Hotlines", 2001).

Furthermore, corporate call centers for many customer-service and data-entry applications have been off-shored in recent years which demonstrates that similar training programs for telephone counseling could have matching success in the developing world. A last, yet critically important step in the training of PCAs is ensuring that they have competency in the use of a referral database for community resources. One suggested model is that trainees master the use of a simplified directory for quick situations (such as those that arise in typical calls to counseling call centers) and compliment that with a highly detailed directory that is all-inclusive (Training Manual, 2001).

A final consideration in the staffing and training stage of the model is orienting the PCAs to the use of telecommunications equipment. While in the developed world it is taken for granted that everyone has a telephone and, therefore, understands how to properly use it, such an assumption might be misguided in underdeveloped regions. In the case of telephone counseling call centers, sophisticated telecommunications equipment is required which may mean additional training for potential counselors. It would be ideal if

everyone was already an expert, but this might be an overly presumptuous expectation. Acquiring such equipment brings up another key step in the model.

The implementation team will need to pay particular attention to the concern of raising the funds necessary for the real estate and capital requirements needed to sustain a new call center for there is “no greater hurdle to overcome than the identification of funding for such projects” (Speedland, 2004). Funding will need to be secured for several vital components of the new call center. For example, there will need to be a physical space to house the call center and its staff and this means that the budget will have to reflect the substantial cost that renting or purchasing entails.

Finding a suitable location should not be overlooked as an obvious step. This is in part because call center will have special needs and these have to be given consideration before new services can be implemented. Ideal call centers need to be quiet, able to be occupied twenty-four hours a day, and need to be able to support a lot of telecommunications equipment (Stark, 1994). This equipment may also require the generation of substantial funds. It seems obvious, and may go without saying, but a telephone counseling center needs to have telephones. This may include grant writing, seeking donations of new or used equipment, or purchasing. Securing these funds calls

for contact with a number of sources, such as “domestic or international donors, civil society organizations, government” and others (Speedland, 2004). These costs will be ongoing, for example, as new technologies become available, they can also be applied to the benefit of call centers. Computers and web-based databases could greatly enhance the usability of information and referral resources as well as enabling networks of development support projects (Lester, 2002). There are also several features that could be added to the call center’s roster of equipment such as hands-free headsets, rollover lines for heavy call volume services, and toll-free telephone numbers (Rosenfield, 1997).

Another vital step that requires substantial funds is the creation of a publicity campaign introducing the new service to the community. New services also need to be publicized in order that the target recipients are aware of the services offered. This can take whatever form fits best in a particular country or community. Marketing strategies can include newspaper, television, and radio announcements (in areas where such offerings are available), or could be done through posters and flyers (SIECUS, 2002). Popular celebrities or governmental officers could act as spokespersons for telephone counseling services. The name of the service or telephone number could be selected in a way to be memorable, trendy, or

attractive. Any strategy that might convey to the target audience that services are accessible to them. The marketing campaign should also educate the community about the services offered, and how they help to solve local or national problems. Further, the services should be marketed in a way that highlights the anonymous and judgment-free nature of the counseling interaction, so those cultural barriers against use are lessened. In cases where cultural barriers are especially high for a particular group (for example, for women or racial/ethnic groups that are discriminated against), the marketing strategy should react by aggressively targeting them and deconstructing myths that prevent populations from seeking help (SIECUS, 2002). Even with the best of intentions, a counseling service can have no effect if it has no clients.

It would be an oversimplification to claim that the above list encompasses every last detail that goes into implementing a new telephone counseling services. Of course there are many other responsibilities that will fall on implementation teams, as well as having to worry about the inevitable yet unexpected foibles that typically accompany the implementation of new projects. That said, it should be remembered that oversimplification is the aim of this exercise. By keeping the model general and flexible the aim is to produce a document that can serve a practical purpose for the maximum number of communities and the maximum number of

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problem areas. Please refer to Appendix A for a brief introduction to some specific uses of TCIC in the developing world. What has been attempted is to develop a basic list of the bare essentials required to start a telephone counseling service in the developing world. This list has adapted over the past half-century, and it is bound to adapt further in the next fifty years, but it does represent a useful map to navigate those pioneering efforts at using telephone counseling services in support of human development.

SECTION SIX

Conclusion

Underdevelopment throughout the world currently robs the majority of humanity of the opportunity to enjoy fundamental human rights. Within this frame we see billions of people (disproportionately women and children) locked in a poverty the depths of which we would shudder to imagine (UNDP, 2003). From continent to continent, the world's majority, the poor, are denied the most basic dignity of existence. Sadly, there exists no magic wand to wave, no universal remedy, no quick fix. Furthermore, any prescriptions offered are shaped by the systems they would be placed into. Options addressing the larger problem, underdevelopment, must compliment these systems or at least have the capability of functioning in spite of such

systems. Briefly, solutions must be applicable to the prevailing economic, cultural, religious, and political environment in which they are implanted.

Refusing to heed such systems has led to many of the development failures and contributed to the development reversals being witnessed in the least developed countries of the global South. The tendency has been, rather than to better equip development projects to cope in specific realities, to blame the poor for their poverty. Cited have been areas too slow to adapt to liberalized markets as well as areas with cultural (gendered, religious, political) characteristics unfriendly to development (UNDP, 2003). On the other hand, perhaps it has been that development schemes have failed because their design has not taken into account whether or not they have the necessary ingredients for success amidst imperfect conditions.

It has been pointed out that development projects have suffered from a western-centrism that stifles their ability to be practical in the developing world (Wilkins, 2000). The next step to take is breaking such a statement down into its actual elements. We do have examples of development support communication that are practical and effective. We also have experience in pioneering projects in adverse conditions. The use of telephones for counseling and to organize aid

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and support projects has stood as a towering achievement throughout the developed world. It has done so in the face of dubious certainty that such an application would have effect and it has flourished in a multitude of problem areas because it possesses characteristics that lower barriers to its usage. Perhaps most important for the discussion of international human development is that such services lend themselves to a process of implementation that is relatively universal and simple.

The history of telephone counseling in the developed world is instructive for the discourse of new development support communication. Whereas the United States was already a highly developed nation by the 1950's, it still offers insights for the developing world today. Counseling services had to contend with both an air of skepticism about their practicality and a population unaccustomed to the use of new technologies in help seeking. Much the same could be said about the hurdles that counseling by telephone must face in the developing world. Armed with the lessons learned from the case of the developed world's history and current effective use, new initiatives for poor countries may be able to bypass some of the early hard lessons and accelerate toward the goal of establishing cheap, useful, and accessible services with a minimum of foibles.

The success of counseling by telephone enjoyed by those in developed countries hint at the promise of equal success elsewhere. Constant improvement and refinement in areas such as awareness raising, marketing of services, and social taboo deconstruction have strengthened the effectiveness and sustainability of telephone counseling over the past half century. These are also areas of great need for development support projects (SEICUS, 2002). There is no shortage of issues that would greatly benefit from the implementation of counseling by telephone in the developing world. All the heart-wrenching causes of human suffering are accounted for. An abbreviated listing includes growing hunger, poor levels of education, high levels of violent conflict, increases in disease, decreases in access to healthcare, racism, sexism, abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction, suicide, susceptibility to natural disasters, and low levels of basic human rights.

What complicates the issue of using telephone counseling to alleviate such development problems is that barriers to its implementation exist in the developing world, just as they did in the United States. Primary among these barriers is low levels of telephone access in much of the developing world. This is the most fundamental problem in the way of development support communication projects that call for telephone use. Obviously, one can not use a telephone if

there are none. The current trends in telephone penetration for the developing world offer some hope for improvement in this area. Especially promising are factors such as the liberalization of telecommunications operators in many countries and the explosion in popularity of new technologies such as mobile telephony. These developments have already led to a shrinking in the access gap between rich and poor countries and projections that the underdeveloped countries will continue to be the fastest growing telecommunications markets (WTDR, 2002). Access gaps, however, are not the sole problem.

Another critical concern of development support communication in general, and telephone counseling use specifically, are the barriers to development initiatives that stem from cultural differences. This blanket term grossly generalizes a complex set of factors that will vary from country to country, but that may be simplified and stated in a useful way for the discussion of new telephone counseling services in the developing world. The relevant cultural topics introduced have included attitudes toward technology acceptance and help-seeking behaviors, religious attitudes relating to development, the cultural implications of class, race, and gender inequality, and the political-cultural characteristics of developing countries.

These problems are commonly viewed as serious contributors to the failure of development projects. They are seen as pitfalls to be sidestepped. Rather than perpetuate that mode of thought, this set of circumstances can be viewed as an invitation to develop initiatives that are tailored to fit around such problem areas. It has been suggested that increased cultural sensitivity is highly important to the implementation of successful development campaigns (Steeves in Wilkins, 2000). Addressing the cultural barriers to the uptake of telephone counseling not only increases our understanding of the need for human development throughout the global South but also highlights the characteristics of such counseling that actually lower barriers.

One of the existing factors that bodes well for telephone counseling is that the poor countries of the world are heavily laden with the kinds of problems that could be effectively addressed through counseling (consult Appendix A). In terms of the actual characteristics of telephone-mediated counseling for human development that lower barriers to its use are both those related to the specialized communication process utilized by phone counseling, and those arising from interacting through telephones. Between these two sets of factors, most of the barriers to telephone use for counseling in the developing world are removed or at least lowered. What then remains

is taking the development support project from the drawing board to the switchboard.

The principal goal of this review has thus far been exploration. To seek out and illuminate the most concise elements of the discourse on telephone counseling for international human development. Taking the exploration into the realm of practicality, a blueprint of sorts has been drawn up. With the goal in mind to develop a general and universal model for the implementation of new telephone counseling services, a brief and simple list of the necessary components has been illustrated. The intention of the section was to provide a skeleton on which to hang the muscle behind this development proposal, namely a nuanced and respectful understanding of the particular cultural characteristics of the target community.

In the struggle to improve the state of human development through communication applications there is a high demand for creativity in the design of new and suitable projects. Here it is important not to overlook those avenues that are already in existence in developed countries. A new opportunity for communication in support of human development awaits in the combination of telephone counseling with underdeveloped nations. The belief upheld by telephone counseling is that people are more than capable of solving their own problems given access to the appropriate resources, and this

belief shifts the paradigm of dependency on rich countries for human development to one of empowerment of underdeveloped populations to effect a positive and sustainable change for their own lives. There is much reason to believe we can accomplish all this through picking up the phone.

APPENDIX A

This appendix will suggest some specific applications that lend themselves to the effective use of TCIC. Up to this point the exercise has been one of generality, driven by the thought that a single type of intervention could have widespread effect in the field of global human development. Now the focus will shift briefly to the task of giving tangible examples of problem areas, demographic groups, geographic regions or cultural characteristics that should foster the implementation of TCIC services.

Consistent with human development's component of increasing life opportunities through education, TCIC is a particularly well-suited intervention. Information referral services that put people in contact with accurate, up to date information in a judgement-free environment would provide a quick method for making education accessible. There are several examples of this type of intervention.

Teen hotlines represent a tool capable of reaching a massive population as the developing world is demographically marked by an adolescent majority (UNDP, 2003). Furthermore, teens are a group that typically display more openness to technology than older generations (Cruz, 2001). Teen lines that focus on reproductive health and are staffed by knowledgeable counselors would have a very real impact on addressing the growth of sexually transmitted infections. In

the United States (a culture that is comparatively open when placed next to most developing countries) research on teen lines has shown that teens often seek advice or need help with problem solving skills, but feel as if there is no one to safely talk to in their circle of family and peers (Boehm, 1991). It is arguable that this finding would be even more prevalent in the more traditional cultures of the developing world. Furthermore it is beyond doubt that the services would reach a population of teens at a much greater risk from poor reproductive health than anywhere in the developed world (UNDP, 2003).

TCIC services that manifest themselves in the form of information and referral centers focused on the needs of women in the developing world would also be an extremely salient intervention in terms of addressing human development concerns. The empowerment and equality of women is a central theme of the push to define global sustainable development in terms of quality of human life, especially given the reality that those suffering most from the ill effects of underdevelopment have been and continue to be women (UNDP, 2003). Examples of problem areas that TCIC could effectively address for this demographic group include counseling for marriage and other family concerns (including but not limited to spousal abuse and legal matters), as well as employment counseling and, of course, sexual and reproductive health counseling (Palmer, 1997). All of these

are fertile grounds for human development initiatives as it is now recognized that gender inequality in the developing world has become a huge barrier to the success of projects aimed at making sustainable gains (UNDP, 2003). Another area of critical concern where TCIC services could offer help is information and referral services for women with HIV/AIDS and, in particular, mothers of HIV infected babies (Wiener, 1998).

HIV/AIDS is likely the best problem area within which to implement TCIC services for a number of reasons touched on in the body of this thesis. It is undeniable that the developing world faces a crisis in terms of HIV/AIDS that threatens to reach pandemic levels in certain regions and is a growing concern almost universally (UNDP, 2003). TCIC would be ideal for this application because it offers people a chance to openly discuss taboo topics that, left unaddressed, pose a problem to the larger society. Also, TCIC could act to deconstruct myths and stigmas that prevent people from dealing with HIV-related concerns. As stated before, when traditional cultures stifle dialogue on important issues the result is that people are forced to remain silent or (worse) receive false information from peer groups that lack reliable information (Chandiramani, 1998). The most effective interventions in the developing world should reflect the "need

for health care professionals to concentrate their work at the level of already held beliefs” (Chandiramani, 1998, 6).

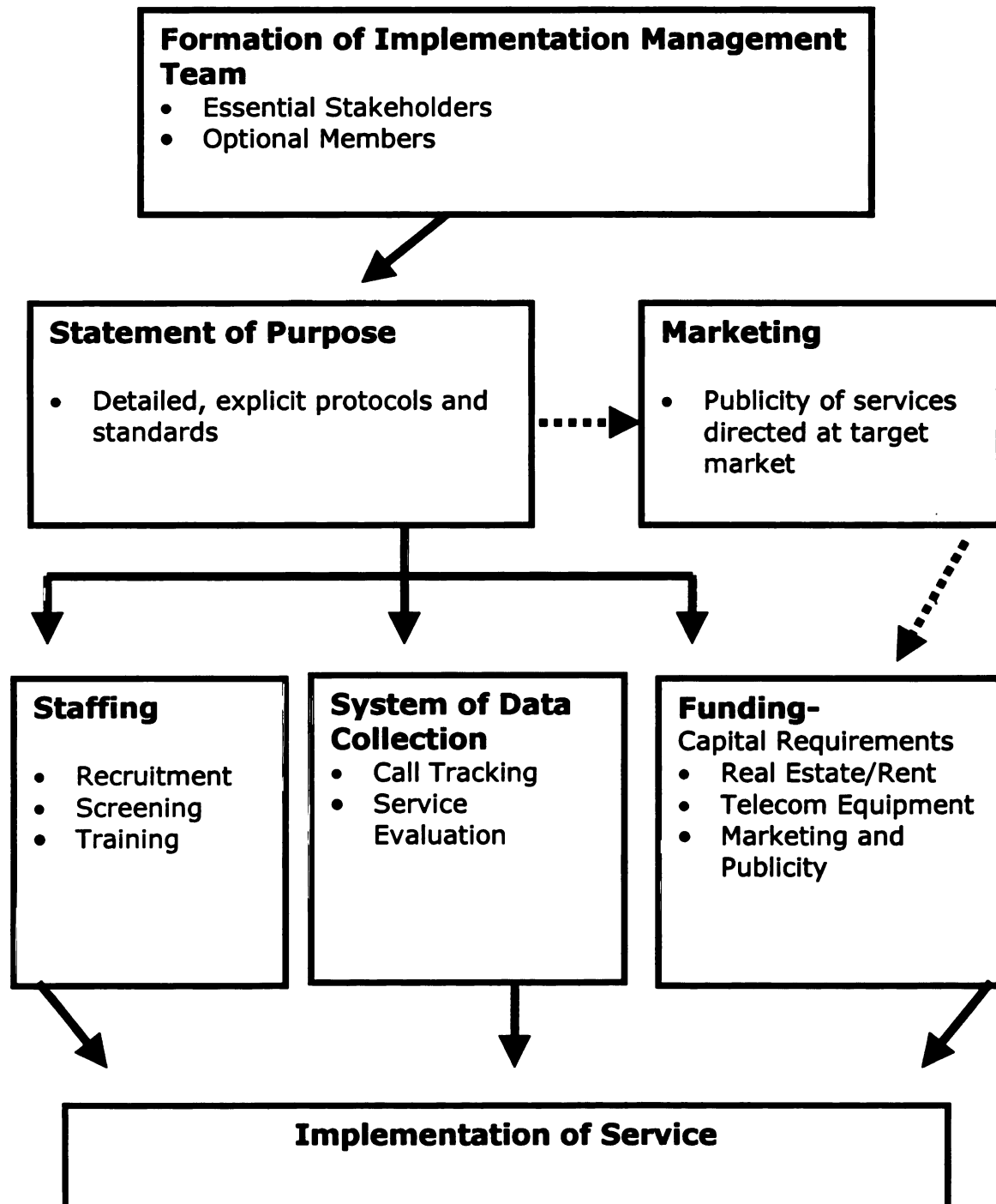
In terms of cultural characteristics that seem to hinder human development, there are a few that TCIC seems apt to combat. Areas that are embroiled in violent conflict, whether spanning generations or coming about suddenly, have suffered serious development reversals that are not easy to recover from (UNDP, 2003). Here crisis counseling could be used to help individuals and families cope as well as relieve the fear and anxiety associated with conflict by providing support and valuable information in emergency situations (Shamai, 1994). These services could be set up quickly and dismantled once the conflict has subsided or they could become a more lasting form of support for perpetually war-torn areas. Such interventions have been applied successfully in developed-world conflict zones such as in Israel during the first Gulf War (Shamai, 1994).

Another cultural characteristic having negative impact on human development is the tendency for underdeveloped communities to be situated in harsh, extreme, or dangerous locales. The recent Tsunami is a drastic example of the fact that the developing world countries are more at risk of suffering from natural disasters and are less capable of dealing with natural disasters (UNDP, 2003). TCIC could be imposed to aid the clean-up and recovery efforts of areas suffering from natural

disasters, and once again information referral services would be extremely important at such times, helping to coordinate the available resources that victims would need to rely upon.

APPENDIX B

CALL CENTER IMPLEMENTATION FLOWCHART



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