

Educational Material on Primary Health Care

June 13, 1983

It was a colorful spectacle. The exhibit looked more like a children's fair than like a serious health care exhibit. But, after all, that is what the whole thing was about. It was a non-formal approach to health education. Its purpose? To remove the aura traditionally surrounding health and health education, and to bring them down to the people so that children and grown-ups, educated and uneducated, can all understand and participate in them. The exhibit was one of the first attempts to bring health out of the doctor's clinic and to put it where it really belongs: at home, in schools, in the villages, and in the fields.

Entitled "Educational Materials in Primary Health Care", the exhibit was held from June 10-13 in the Ministry of Tourism Hall in Beirut. It was prepared mainly by the Department of Health and Behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Participating were AUB health students as well as some non-AUB students and health practitioners. The participants had earlier this year

participated in a health care education seminar sponsored by the Faculty of Health Sciences at AUB.

With very limited materials, and a great deal of hard work and talent, these young students and health workers attempted to translate the complicated language of health into colorful symbols and images understandable by all. Posters, charts, flannelgraphs, games, cassettes, slides, plays, puppets, and songs were some of the teaching aids suggested for health education. In short and simple terms and with plenty of color and variety, one learned all about primary health care: How to prepare an easy homemade cure for diarrhea, how to purify water, what family planning is all about, how to keep oneself healthy through good nutrition, how to make your child's growth chart, and many more important and interesting health lessons and ideas.

Good health, the lessons told us, is easy to attain and can be very inexpensive — but only if we know how. For years now, only the privileged could afford good health-care and service. It is no longer so. Good health is a basic right which we can all learn how to acquire. It is a daily process in which we should all participate.

Nada Khuri