

Principles of Administration Applied to Nursing Service

Paper read by Miss E. Paull at the ICN Congress, Rome

Administration.

Administration has been defined as the selection, provision and employment of resources for a purpose, the fulfilment of which is desirable or compulsory. It has also been defined as the development of people, not the management of things. As such, *knowledge of the nature of human motivation and human relations is as important to the administrator as is technical competence in his particular field".

The principal factors in administration are planning, organisation of resources to put the plan into effect, execution of the plan, and evaluation.

Planning.

The guide lines for planning will be the aims and objects and general policies of the organisation. The plan itself, will be, in a sense, a forecast of some action which is to be taken and is, therefore, liable to be affected by factors which were not foreseen. An essential of good planning, therefore, is to reduce the unforeseeable factors to the minimum by a careful preliminary investigation of the situation and resources by persons competent to analyse the facts obtained. The plan should be realistic and workable, the objectives being thought out and defined clearly, and within reach. The plan should also be flexible so that it can be adapted to any unforeseen changes in the situation or resources. Unless a plan is being made for a new project, it should, as far as possible, be designed to fit into the framework of the existing administrative structure.

Organisation.

***The purpose of organisation is to

*WHO Expert Committee on MCH—Second Report.

**WHO Expert Committee on Nursing—Third Report.

unify effort." It includes determination of the workers and materials needed to do the work, as well as the establishment of policies and conditions which will be conducive to the best use of available resources, human and material. As said earlier "Administration is the development of people" and certain principles have been recognised as fundamental for that purpose. They are:—

- *(1) That the quality of the working force is the most vital factor in success.
- (2) That initiative is to be encouraged.
- (3) That the raising of morale in the working group is more important than the imposition of a right discipline.
- (4) That training based on careful selection must become a conscious and continuous process.
- (5) That proficiency is not dependent on skill alone, but in the use made of available energy and latent ability, and that potential qualities can be drawn out under favourable working conditions by the proper guidance, direction and stimulus by those who administer.

Execution of the Plan.

As the purpose of the plan is to do something, execution is the tangible outcome of planning. To ensure that the work is carried on in accordance with the plan, and that the major objective does not suffer because of other associated objectives, it is necessary to have one person responsible for the overall direction of the plan. This does not mean that all authority is vested in one person; delegation of authority is an essential component of good administration.

Evaluation.

Evaluation may be said to be ***the

*WHO Draft Manual on Nursing Service Administration.

**WHO Expert Committee on MCH Administration—Second Report.

systematic assessment of progress made towards reaching a predetermined goal". Evaluation from time to time during the progress of the plan may indicate a need for modification as well as show whether the desired results were being achieved.

Application of Principles of Administration to Nursing Service.

In some of our countries nurses have been slow to realise that they are a part of the community and that the principles of teaching and administration that apply to other services also apply to nursing service. But now, throughout the world, nurses are emerging from their cloister and turning to general education for principles of nursing education and to management for ideas on nursing administration, and they are profiting by knowledge and experience gained in other fields of learning and work.

Today it is axiomatic that every nurse should be a teacher. Similarly every nurse should be required to understand the principles of administration, and learn to plan and organise her work and to evaluate the results at whatever level she is placed.

Planning.

The first step will be to identify specific problems and to define clearly the objectives of the plan. For long term planning there should be goals set at stages, both as an aid to evaluation and for satisfaction of those who are carrying out the plan.

Whether in a hospital or in the public health field the central purpose of the nursing service is the total nursing care of the individual, sick or well. The resources of the nursing service would be constantly organised for this purpose, though there may be no regular appraisal of the routine carried out and of the quality of service given. In such a situation any innovation will call for planning if it is to be introduced smoothly and effectively. For example, the desired objective may be an improved and more active practice of health teaching. Investigation of the existing situation would be the first step.

This would include :—

- (1) a study of the various activities involved in health teaching, such as, example, demonstration, group and individual talks ;
- (2) an assessment of resources, such as the time that can be given to health teaching, the available teaching aids and the extent of knowledge and skills of health teaching possessed by the staff ;
- (3) the nature of interpersonal relationships among the staff and their attitude towards the new project.

It is one of the principles of administration that investigation should be undertaken by those who know about the situation and practices to be investigated, and have the ability to analyse and interpret the findings. Of a necessity, therefore, staff of all categories concerned with health teaching will be engaged in one or other aspect of investigation and thus will have not only an opportunity to voice their opinions and difficulties, but also to have a share in the planning. This participation by nurses who are working in the actual situation in which the plan is to operate will help to make the plan workable and flexible, and ensure that a new practice fits into the daily routine without any dislocation.

Organisation.

Good organisation is evidence of good administration, and to be successful, it should give primary consideration to the human factor. No effort should be spared in careful selection and preparation of staff and in keeping up their morale. The factors concerned in organisation cover a wide range and include the following :—

(1) Terms and Conditions of Service.

The terms of service, such as, pay scale, leave, provision for superannuation, etc., should be stated clearly and should be comparable to the terms offered in allied professions. If quarters are provided they should be of a reasonable standard and there should be no restrictions other than those necessary for the common good. Measures to protect the health of the staff are

necessary and would include, besides a health service, provision of facilities for recreation, changing and rest rooms for staff living outside, and opportunity as well as teaching for healthful living.

An important factor in good working conditions is the provision of means to do good nursing. These include sufficient time and equipment and also guidance and support. All categories of staff should be encouraged to give thought to improving their work and have the opportunity for discussion and consideration of their views and ideas. *"To be content and productive, the staff must be fully participant rather than merely obedient."

(2) **Recruitment of Nursing Staff.** Recruitment should be the responsibility of the Nurse Director of the Nursing Service though it may be done in consultation with senior members of the nursing and medical staff. Recruitment should be based on a clear concept of the qualities and qualifications necessary for the proper performance of the functions concerned.

(3) **Staff Education.** This should be a continual process, it is one which is necessary to develop and heighten the efficiency of the nursing staff, to bring about better co-operation amongst them and to obtain a greater co-ordination of effort. Staff education also helps the staff to gain a true understanding of the aims and purpose of the organisation they serve, and, by thus fostering a sense of loyalty and responsibility, leads to a greater willingness to co-operate in solving problems and in a more economic and careful use of material resources. Professional growth is stimulated by the opportunity afforded for expression and exchange of ideas.

(4) **Interpersonal relationships.** Good conditions of work, opportunities for professional advancement as well as individual development give a sense of security which, in turn, leads to good interpersonal relationships. New members of staff should be made to feel welcome and be given a comprehensive

orientation to all aspects of their new assignments. The development of an ethical attitude towards work, and courtesy and respect for each individual should be the constant endeavour of the administrator.

(5) **Nursing Students.** As student nurses and midwives constitute an appreciable proportion of the nursing staff, particularly in hospitals, their particular needs as well as contribution should be taken into account in the planning and organising of a nursing programme. While consideration of the needs of students lies within the purview of Nursing Education authorities, it will be the responsibility of the administrator to give the students an opportunity to take part in planning, and if students are used to any extent for nursing service, to make sure that a balance is kept between the learning needs of the students and the service needs of the hospital. Students should not be expected to undertake responsibilities for which they are not prepared, e.g., should not be left alone on night duty unless they are sufficiently advanced in their course and nursing supervision is provided.

(6) **Lines of Authority and Responsibility.** A definite line of authority should be laid down beginning with the authority to whom the Director of Nursing is responsible for the organisation and work of the nursing service. She should be given full authority to discharge this responsibility, which she in turn would delegate to different grades of her nursing staff. Definite lines of authority and official channels of communication help to establish correct relationship between the nursing staff and also between the nursing department and other departments of the health service. Duties and responsibilities at each level should be clearly defined and responsibility and authority should go hand in hand.

(7) **Equipment.** Provision of adequate and appropriate equipment is essential for carrying out a plan effectively, and also for the staff to derive satisfaction from work well done. Lack of proper equipment leads to waste of time and

*WHO Expert Committee on MCH—Second Report.

effort. All the same much can be done by good arrangements and improvisation, if the staff has been encouraged to use initiative.

(8) **Records and Reports.** A proper system of maintaining records is essential for effective administration. Reports are of great value in checking the progress of the plan of action. To obtain good results the system should be examined to ensure that only such information as is necessary is required to be reported, and that the nursing staff understand the reason for keeping the various records.

(9) **Budgeting.** It is important that the budget for nursing service be made in consultation with the Director of Nursing and that she should have authority to incur expenditure under the various heads. Any procedure which leads to delay in getting sanction for expenditure is wasteful and cause of much frustration.

Execution of the Plan.

Administration is not a process divided into stages, but is one in which various factors come into play at the same time. Thus, if the preliminary planning has been done in consultation with those who will put the plan into effect, the plan will have gained acceptance of the staff, which in itself, is an important factor in executing the plan. The lines of authority defined in the process of organisation will be the channel through which the plan will be put into operation and the development of satisfactory interpersonal relationships will facilitate team-work in carrying out the various activities entailed.

Supervision is an important feature, being the device by which the administrator realises the greatest possible advantage of the staff education programme. It is a means of following up gains and of assuring that the end product of staff education is good nursing service. It is also valuable in improving skills, stimulating initiative, and in keeping a watch on maintaining economy in nursing service.

Evaluation.

It has been said that "an educated man is one who knows when a proposition is proved; one who knows how to judge fairly and critically the argument purporting to lead to some conclusion; who knows, therefore, the kind of argument and kind of evidence that is relevant to a given kind of inquiry." I feel that the same may be said of the Nursing Administrator. She cannot be an expert on all branches of nursing, but she should be able to recognise the right method to apply to a given problem.

If the objectives of the plan, short and long term, have been clearly defined, they will be the criteria against which progress can be measured. A watch on the results obtained during the course of the plan, will give the opportunity for any adjustments and modifications necessary for success. If the objective is an improved practice of health teaching the results will not be apparent at once. It would be necessary, therefore, to set some concrete goals to find out whether the teaching has been effective.

Administration is an art of straight thinking and disciplined unravelling of cause and effect. The principles which I have attempted to outline can be applied to any field of nursing service at various levels of authority. Whether at the national or district level, or in a hospital, a ward or a health centre, the responsibility of the administrator will be to plan a programme to meet the needs of the situation in accordance with the resources of staff and equipment that can be available, and to plan for the proper training and distribution of the staff. It will also be her responsibility to endeavour to obtain conditions which give her staff security and confidence, and enable them to develop their competence—technical, social and spiritual—to the fullest extent.

Nursing has travelled a long way from the day it started as an organised profession barely 100 years ago. Its

*Caldin E. F. History & Philosophy of Science—University Quarterly, August 1952.

specialisation and development today as a highly technical profession have compelled authorities in every country to place Nursing Administration in the hands of nurses themselves. It is a challenge and a call for us to prove our mettle and there is no room for a small person with a limited outlook in such an organisation. It calls for qualities of leadership and motives of service of the highest order. It calls for a person with a broad and progressive outlook and a sense of fairplay as well as sound professional education, and a philosophy of life.

If administration is harnessing of resources for a special purpose, it may be said that it is also the conduction of energy released from the process of harnessing along special channels for the attainment of that purpose. For administration to be effective, the harnessing must be complete. For the administrative machinery to move without hitches, the conduction of energy should reach

all the pivots. The aims and objectives of the organisation should be clearly defined while the purpose of the set-up should be amply stated. Its philosophy and method of work should be fully understood by its own members as well as those outside it. The responsibility of each member should be made known to her as well as to those whom she knows well.

In an organisation where goals are clearly stated, methodology of work laid down, relationship of members defined and constant evaluation takes place of its own activities, there is harmony and peace within the organisation and prestige for it outside. There is dissemination of knowledge from such an organisation and as days go by there is greater and greater service to the community. Such is the fabric of a State Nursing Service Organisation while the strands out of which this fabric is woven, are human relationships, human values and human needs.

Report of the Executive Secretary, Miss Bridges — (Contd. from page 263)

in connection with our Quadrennial Meetings, for an election of new officers inevitably means the retirement of others; therefore I cannot close this Report without an expression of my personal gratitude to our President, Mlle. Bihet, and to our Vice-Presidents, Miss Gerda Hojer, Miss Katharine Densford and Miss Lucy Duff-Grant, for their unfailing help and wise guidance. I thank, too, our Hon. Treasurer, Miss G. E. Davies for her tolerance and help to me personally and for her unremitting care of our financial affairs. To all of our Officers we are immeasurably indebted, and we shall sadly miss those who are retiring after having been in office for a number of years.

The strength of the I.C.N. lies not in its Headquarters, nor the Staff who work there; but in the continued support and interest of our Member Associations and

of our individual members, now numbering almost half a million. Provided we remain convinced of the importance of our work, we shall continue to demonstrate in action the value of collaboration within the profession; and in the strength of that collaboration I am confident we can meet the demands which will inevitably be made on us during the next quadrennial period.

To Members of S.N.A.

The Annual Conference of the Student Nurses Association is to be held in Lucknow from October 7th to 11th (both inclusive). Will you please send items for the agenda to me by 31st August, 57. Exhibition Forms and other relevant information will be sent to you later.

I. DORABJI
S.N.A. Secretary