

PART THREE

LEARNING TO USE THE BOOK, WHERE THERE IS NO DOCTOR

A book on basic health care is a tool for sharing ideas and knowledge. If clearly and simply written, it can be used by anyone who knows how to read. However, if persons are given suggestions and guided practice in use of the book, it will usually serve them better.

In Part Three of this book, we give many suggestions for helping people learn to use the village health care handbook, *Where There Is No Doctor (WTND)*. But many of these suggestions apply to any health or 'how-to-do-it' manual.

'Book learning' for health workers has two objectives:

- To help health workers themselves learn to use their books effectively.
- To help health workers learn how to help others use the book, or to use the ideas and information it contains.

Instruction in 'use of the book' can take place in many ways. It may be a key part of a 2- or 3-month health worker training course. It may take place in weekly meetings of village mothers, led by a health worker. Or it may be only a brief explanation given by a health worker to a folk healer or midwife from a distant village.

LEARNING TO USE BOOKS RATHER THAN RELYING ON MEMORY:



If training helps health workers learn to use reference books effectively, they will continue to learn and study long after the course is over.



We know an old folk healer who cannot read. But she has her 8-year-old granddaughter read to her from *WTND* while she studies the pictures.

A community health worker needs to know how to do many things. A wide range of information and skills are needed in his work. But he cannot be expected to keep all the necessary information in his head. Therefore . . .

Training should not focus on memorizing a lot of information, but on LEARNING HOW TO LOOK THINGS UP.

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Combining literacy training with health skills: Because being able to look things up is such an important skill, some programs—especially in Africa—link learning to read with practice in solving health problems. Student health workers who can already read and write help teach those who are learning. Thus, a book like *Where There Is No Doctor* in the local language helps people learn health skills and literacy skills at the same time. (For more ideas on combining literacy training with health skills and critical awareness, see Chapter 26.)

SCHEDULED CLASSES ON 'USE OF THE BOOK' DURING HEALTH WORKER TRAINING

In the 2-month training course in Ajoya, Mexico, 'Use of the Book' is a regular class that takes place twice a week throughout the course. The first classes help students become familiar with what is in each chapter and each of the special sections of the book. They practice looking things up using the INDEX, list of CONTENTS, charts, and page references. Later classes focus on using the book to help solve problems acted out in role plays.



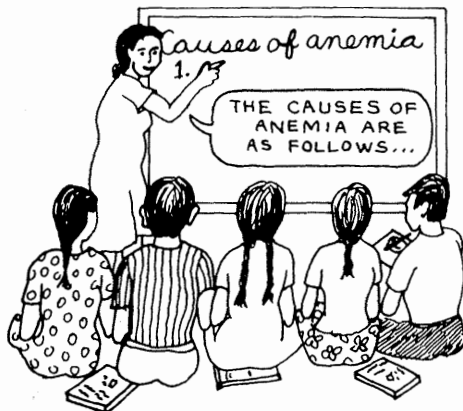
As much as possible, these classes on 'Use of the Book' are coordinated with the other classes, clinical practice, and community visits. They provide related study, lifelike practice, and review. Scheduling is kept flexible so that if students encounter an important problem in clinical practice or community activities, they can explore it further in their next 'Use of the Book' class.

Building 'Use of the Book' into other classes and activities

It is important that learning to use the book not be limited to specific classes. Practice in looking things up and using the book as a tool needs to be built into many areas of study and learning. This means that . . .

During any class, if you have a choice between telling students something or having them find and read it out loud from their books, have them read it from their books!

LESS APPROPRIATE: TELLING



MORE APPROPRIATE: FINDING OUT


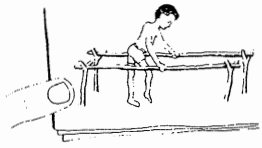
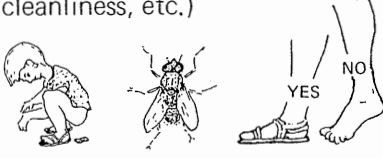

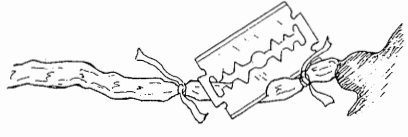

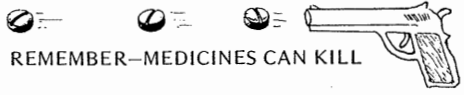


Do not tell the students things that they can learn to look up for themselves.

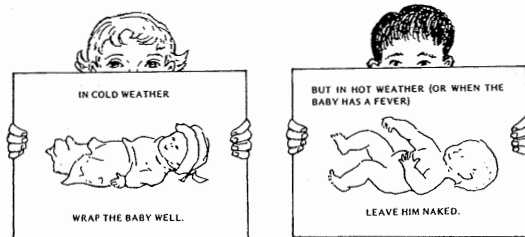
WAYS HEALTH WORKERS CAN USE THEIR BOOK

1. As a **reference book** for diagnosing, treating, and giving advice on specific health problems.
2. As a **tool for teaching** any of the following:



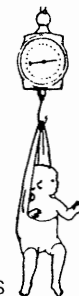
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> families of sick people (reading sections that relate to the illness) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> persons who cannot read (reading to them; discussing pictures with them)  <p>“You can make it like this.”</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> children (games and discussions about the guidelines for cleanliness, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mothers (about children’s growth and nutrition, women’s health, etc.)  <p>BREAST IS BEST</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> midwives (sterile technique, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> farmers (experimenting with different methods) 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shopkeepers and others who sell medicines (see <i>WTND</i>, p. 338) 	 <p>REMEMBER—MEDICINES CAN KILL</p>

3. As an **idea book** for making teaching materials such as posters.



4. As a **source of information** for conducting health activities such as . . .

- under-fives clinics
- check-ups for pregnant women
- nutrition programs
- public health measures



5. As a **guide** for discussing and exploring traditional forms of healing.

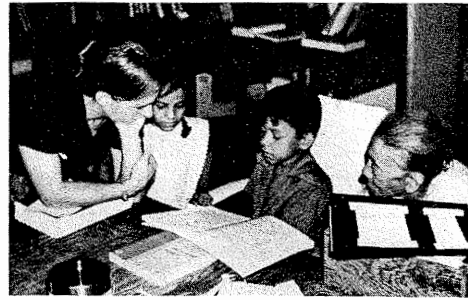


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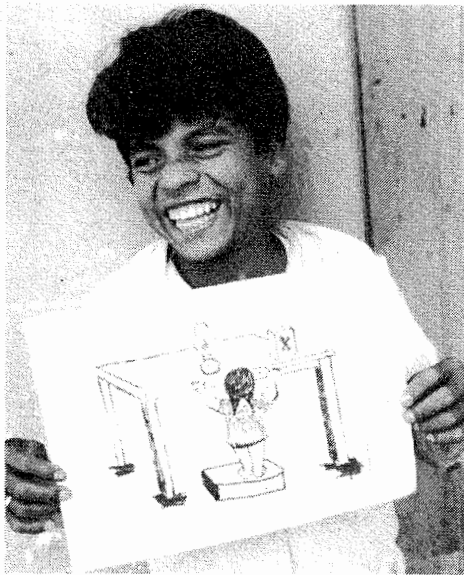
SHARING THE BOOK:

EXAMPLES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

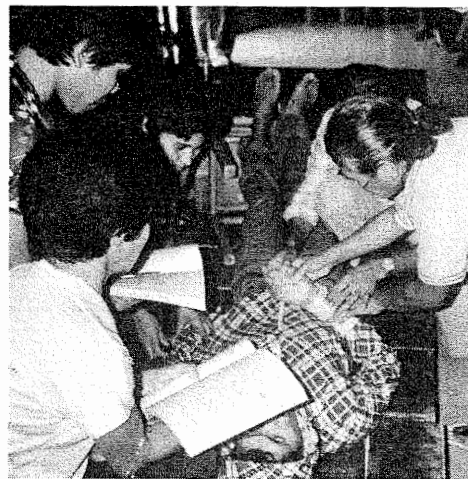
By looking things up in her book together with people, a health worker takes some of the mystery out of medicine. This puts the health worker and other people on equal terms, and gives people more control over their own health.



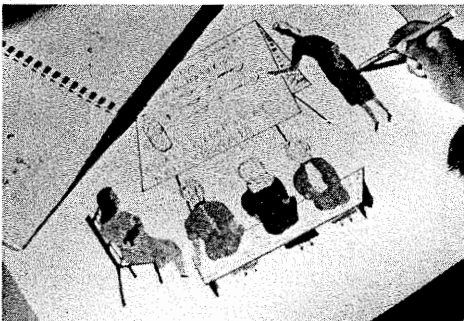
A health worker in Ajoja, Mexico shows two children the pictures of worms in *WTND* and asks them what kind they have.



Pictures from *WTND* have been used for posters in the CHILD-to-child program (see Ch. 24). Here a child shows the importance of keeping poisons out of reach.



Here health workers in the Philippines use *WTND* to learn about fractures, bleeding, and shock in a role play.



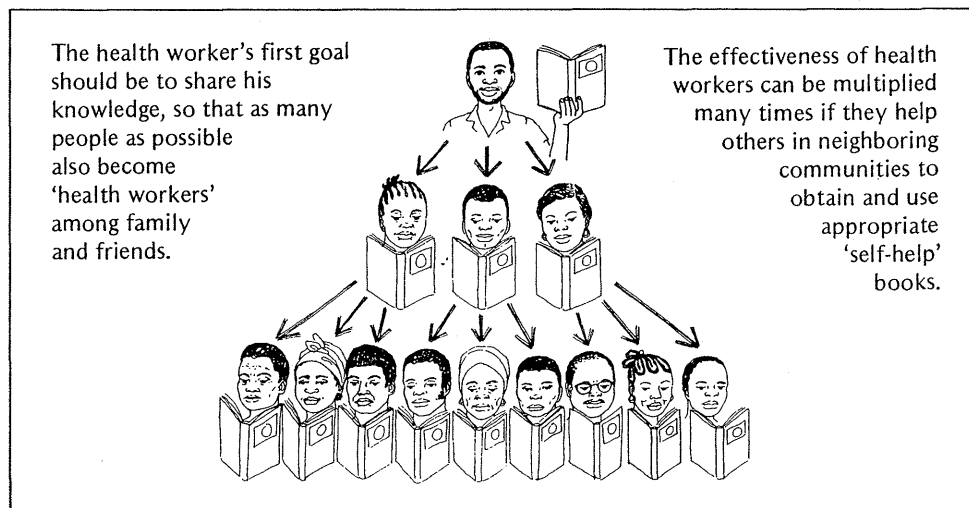
A health worker from Guatemala uses his book in preparing a poster about 'oral rehydration'. A group of curious school children look on. Together they learn about health problems, drawing, teaching, and sharing of ideas.



HELPING OTHERS LEARN TO USE THE BOOK

Where There Is No Doctor was not originally written for trained health workers, but for villagers who need information to care for the health of their families and neighbors. In areas the book has reached, it has served this purpose fairly well. Time and again, we have found that in villages where only one or two persons know how to read, these persons have become important health resources for the village. Their neighbors ask them to look in the book for information about medicines, health problems, and other concerns.

Seeing how often *Where There Is No Doctor* was used as a manual for health workers, after several years we added the introductory section called "Words to the Village Health Worker." However, we still feel that **the book is a tool for anyone who can read and is interested in health.**



Giving brief instructions on how to use the book

Health workers can help others use *Where There Is No Doctor* more effectively if they explain certain features of the book to them. They can point out the different reference sections—the Contents, Index, and Green Pages—and help persons to practice looking up topics that interest them. Even 10 or 15 minutes of such practice can be a big help. Sometimes a health worker can bring small groups together to learn about using the book.

Here we give 12 suggestions for helping others learn how to use *Where There Is No Doctor*. Many of these will be developed more fully in the next 2 chapters:

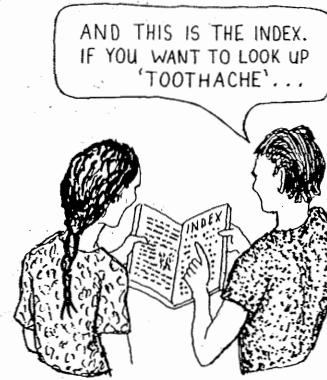
1. Show the person the inside of the front cover, and read the suggestions for HOW TO USE THIS BOOK.
2. Next, review the CONTENTS briefly, so the person gets an idea of what is in each chapter. Explain that she can look in the Contents for the chapter most likely to include the topic she wants. Then she can read the subheadings under the chapter title to see what page to turn to. Help her to practice doing this.

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3. Now turn to the INDEX (yellow pages). Show how the subjects are listed in alphabetical order.

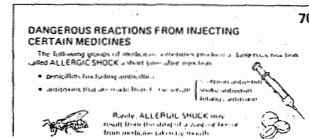
Practice: Ask the person to name a health problem that concerns her. Suppose she says "toothache." First have her flip through the book looking for pictures of teeth. (This is the way most people look for things first.) Next, show her how to find "Toothache" in the CONTENTS, then in the INDEX.

Now have her pick another subject, such as snakebite. Let her try to find it herself, first by flipping through the book, then by using the CONTENTS and the INDEX. Have her turn to the right page and read what it says.



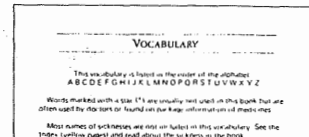
4. **Page references.** Point out that throughout the book there are notes in parentheses () saying "(see p. ____)" or simply "(p. ____)." These give the numbers of pages that have related information. On the second page about snakebite, for example, there is a page reference for precautions to prevent allergic shock (p. 70).

Practice: Have the person look up some page references and read the relevant parts.



5. Show the person the VOCABULARY (WTND, p. 379). Explain that this is an alphabetical list of words and their meanings. Then flip through the book until you spot some words in *italics*—for example, *bacteria* on page 55, and *respiratory* on page 57.

Practice: Have the person look up these words in the vocabulary.



6. Show the person how to look up specific medicines in the GREEN PAGES, using the List of Medicines on page 341 and the Index of Medicines on page 345.



Practice: Have her look up a common medicine, such as aspirin, and read about it. Point out the importance of correct use, correct dosage, and always reading and following the precautions.

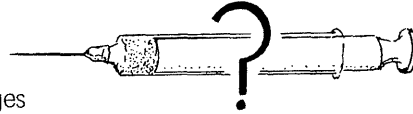
7. **Finding out about a health problem when you are not sure just what it is.** Have the person look in the book under the general kind of problem (skin problem, eye problem, old person's problem, etc.). Or look under the most important symptom or sign—for example, 'cough' or 'fever'.

Point out that in many parts of the book there are guides to help you decide which illness a person probably has. For example:

- Guide to Identification of Skin Problems, p. 196
- Different Illnesses that Cause Fever, p. 26
- Different Kinds of Cough, p. 168

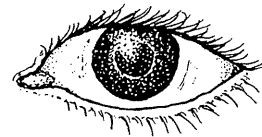
For a more complete list of these guides and a discussion of how to use them, see Chapter 21 of this book.

8. **Avoiding mistakes.** Point out the first 8 chapters of *Where There Is No Doctor*, being sure to show the person Chapter 2, "Sicknesses that are Often Confused," and Chapter 6, "Right and Wrong Uses of Medicines." Look especially at the parts that deal with problems and beliefs common in your area. You may want to mark these pages in the book, so the person can read them later. For example, if people in your area tend to overuse and misuse injections, mark the first 6 pages of Chapter 9 (pages 65-70) for special reading.

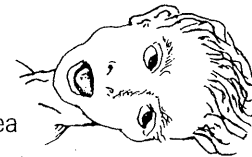


9. If the person will be providing care for sick or injured persons, encourage her to carefully study Chapter 3, "How to Examine a Sick Person," and Chapter 4, "How to Take Care of a Sick Person." If there is time, teach the person some of the basic aspects of history taking and physical examination.
10. **Prevention.** People's first interest in a book like *Where There Is No Doctor* usually has to do with curative medicine. But this interest can serve as a doorway to learning about prevention. Point out how, in discussing nearly any health problem, advice about prevention can be included. Look, for example, at Scabies on p. 199. Stress the importance of preventive advice.

Also encourage the person to read Chapters 11 and 12, on "Nutrition" and "Prevention." Consider putting markers at pages describing preventive action that is especially needed in your area. For example, if blindness due to lack of vitamin A is common in your community, mark page 226. Encourage the person to follow the advice on that page, and to help others to do the same.



11. Point out the chapters and sections that are of special importance to the reader. For example, if she is a mother, show her the chapter on children's health problems. Ask if any of her children has an illness at the moment. See if she can find it in the book. Have her read about it. Then discuss it with her to make sure she understands the information.
12. **Knowing when to seek help.** In making suggestions on how to use the book, emphasize that the person needs to recognize her limitations. Help her to realize that sometimes she will need to seek help from a health worker or doctor. Show her the following pages:
- p. 42, Signs of Dangerous Illness
 - p. 159, When to Seek Medical Help in Cases of Diarrhea
 - p. 256, Signs of Special Risk that Make It Important that a Doctor or Skilled Midwife Attend the Birth—if Possible in a Hospital



By focusing on the 12 points presented here, a person can gain some understanding of how to use the book in as little as 2 or 3 hours. However, these guidelines are only a beginning. There may be other parts of the book that are especially useful for your area. And a great deal of practice is needed to use the book really well. The next 2 chapters suggest ways of providing such practice in a training course.

ADAPTING *WHERE THERE IS NO DOCTOR* TO THE LOCAL SITUATION

The original Spanish edition of *Where There Is No Doctor* was written specifically for use in the mountain area of Western Mexico. In the English version, we tried to make the book so it could be used in many different countries. But clearly, a book that can be used in many areas will not be completely appropriate to any single place. Therefore, some of the information and ideas in the book will apply to your area. Others will not. And some basic information will certainly be missing.

Health workers should recognize the limitations of the book and never use it as their 'bible'. (Unfortunately, this has happened in some health programs.)

Ideally, *Where There Is No Doctor* (or any reference book) should be adapted or rewritten for each area. This has already been done in some parts of the world.



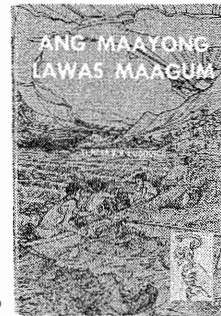
SENEGAL
(French)



TANZANIA
(Swahili)

The editions in Senegal and Tanzania have been adapted and the pictures redone to fit the local people and customs.

In the Philippines, a completely new book has been written, using ideas from *Where There Is No Doctor*.



PHILIPPINES
(Ilonggo)

Unfortunately, not every area will have the time and money to write their own villager's health care handbook, or to adapt the whole of *Where There Is No Doctor*. Where complete adaptations are not possible, we suggest that training programs produce mimeographed sheets or pamphlets to be used along with the book. These can cover additional information that relates to local needs, problems, and customs. Such information sheets might include:

- Local names of illnesses, and ways of looking at sickness and health.
- Examples of traditional forms of healing: beneficial and harmful.
- Names (including brand names and comparative prices) of medicines that are available locally. Or at least have students write this information into the Green Pages of their books.
- A list of commonly misused medicines and mistaken medical practices in your area, with explanations and warnings.
- Information about the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of health problems that are important in your area but are not included in *Where There Is No Doctor*.

Discuss with your students which parts of their books are appropriate to your area and which are not. Encourage them to question the truth or usefulness of anything they read.