

# Helping Health Workers Learn

A book of methods, aids,  
and ideas for instructors  
at the village level

David Werner and Bill Bower



drawings by

David Werner

Pablo Chavez

Regina Faul-Jansen

Marie Ducruy

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Catalog Card No.: 81-85010

Werner, David Bradford and Bower, Bill Larned  
Helping Health Workers Learn

Palo Alto, CA: Hesperian Foundation

632 p.

8111

811015

ISBN: 0-942364-10-4

PUBLISHED BY:

**The Hesperian Foundation**  
1919 Addison Street, Suite 304  
Berkeley, California 94704 U.S.A.

Copyright © 1982 by the Hesperian Foundation. All Rights Reserved.

First Edition, January 1982

**Thirteenth Printing, January 2005**

The Hesperian Foundation encourages others to copy, reproduce, or adapt to meet local needs any or all parts of this book, including the illustrations, provided that the parts reproduced are distributed free or at cost — not for profit.

Any organization or person who wishes to copy, reproduce, or adapt any or all parts of this book for commercial purposes must obtain permission from the Hesperian Foundation.

Before beginning any translation or adaptation of this book or its contents, please contact the Hesperian Foundation for suggestions, updates on the information, and to avoid duplication of efforts. Please send us a copy of any materials in which text or illustrations from this book have been used.

***This book is dedicated to the village health team of Ajoya, Mexico, from whom we have learned a great deal...***

***and to health workers everywhere who side with the poor.***

**REQUEST FOR YOUR COMMENTS,  
CRITICISMS, AND IDEAS:**

This book is only a beginning. We want to improve it—with your help.

If you have any ideas, teaching methods, visual aids, or ways of exploring or learning that you feel might be put into this book, please send them to us.

Also let us know which parts of the book you find most useful, and which parts, pages, or paragraphs you find confusing, badly written, least useful, incorrect, or unfair. We think the book is too long, and ask your help in deciding what to leave out.

**WE ARE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN GETTING SUGGESTIONS FROM VILLAGE AND COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS WHO HAVE BECOME INSTRUCTORS.**

Please write to:

**The Hesperian Foundation  
1919 Addison Street, Suite 304  
Berkeley, California 94704 U.S.A.**

Thank you.

## THANKS

The creation of this book has been a long, cooperative effort. We have borrowed ideas from many sources. Included in these pages are methods and suggestions from health and development programs in 35 countries on 5 continents. Often we mention the programs or countries from which particular ideas have come as we discuss them in the text. Here, however, we give our warm thanks to all programs, groups, and persons whose ideas, suggestions, and financial assistance have contributed to this book.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the village health team in Ajoya, Mexico, especially to Martín Reyes, Miguel Angel Manjarrez, Roberto Fajardo, Miguel Angel Alvarez, Pablo Chávez, Jesús Vega Castro, Rosa Salcido, Guadalupe Aragón, Alejandro Alvarez, Teresa Torres, Anacleto Arana, and Marcelo Acevedo. It is from working with the Ajoya team for many years that we have come to understand the meaning of community-based health care.

We would also like to renew our thanks to the dedicated persons who helped put the first edition of this book together back in 1982: Myra Polinger, Lynn Gordon, Mary Klein, Michael Blake, Hal Lockwood, Christine Taylor, Richard Friedman, Susan Klein, Andy Browne, Ken Tull of World Neighbors, Meg Granito, and Emily Goldfarb. Trude Bock generously provided her home and all-round assistance during the three years it took to give birth to this book.

Our special thanks to B.A. Laris for undertaking the editing, layout, **and paste-up for the tenth printing**. Her efforts make this printing easier to use with the 1992 revision of *Where There Is No Doctor*. Davida Coady updated the **antibiotic learning game** found in Chapter 19 and Martín Lamarque provided current information on organizations that make practical teaching materials available.

For their outstanding drawings, we thank Regina Faul-Jansen, Marie Ducruy, and Pablo Chávez of the village health team in Ajoya. Pablo also invented and helped develop several of the most imaginative teaching aids shown in this book. For many of the drawings and most of the photographs, credit also goes to David Werner.

David Morley, Murray and Gerri Dickson, Fred Abbatt, Pia Moriarity, Sunil Mehra, Laura Goldman, and Esther de Gally reviewed early drafts of this book. We remain grateful for their valuable suggestions and encouragement.

Early drafts of **Helping Health Workers Learn** were field tested in Latin America, Africa, and the Philippines. From these various field trials we received many helpful ideas and suggestions. We are deeply thankful to all those health workers, instructors, volunteers, and health officers who contributed.

For many years our books have been packaged and mailed by a dedicated group of volunteers who contribute their labor to support the Foundation's efforts to make health information available. Without their commitment, far fewer copies of our publications would now be available to people throughout the world. Our thanks to Barbara and Herb Hultgren, Tom Beckett, Paul Chandler, Bob and Kay Schauer, Marge West, and Betsy Wallace.

Over the years we have received financial assistance from many sources for the development and distribution of this book. We are grateful to the Ella Lyman Cabot Trust, the Public Welfare Foundation, Brot für die Welt, OXFAM England, the Sunflower Foundation, Misereor, Helmut and Brigitte Gollwitzer, and Reinhart Freudenberg. We also thank the Carnegie Corporation of New York for funding gratis distribution of this, and other Hesperian publications, in Africa. We wish to thank the many generous friends of the Hesperian Foundation who have donated their time and resources to support the struggle for better health and a better world.


## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is mainly for instructors of village health workers—especially those instructors who are village health workers themselves. But it may be of use to anyone involved in community education.

The book can be used in several ways:

One way is to start at the beginning and read through it. But most of you will be too busy to do this.

Another way is to *skim* the book, going through it quickly for the main ideas. To do this, look at and read what stands out most, namely:

- the pictures 
- what is written in **dark letters**
- |                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| what is inside the boxes like this |
|------------------------------------|

As you skim, you can stop and read complete pages or sections about ideas that especially interest you.

Still another way is to use this as a *reference book*. Review those pages or sections that apply to a particular activity you are planning—a class, a role play, the preparation of teaching materials, or whatever. (In most cases, the book will not tell you ‘how to do it’, but will give ideas or examples you can choose from, think about, or adapt to your own needs.)

To find a topic you are looking for in the book, you can use either the list of CONTENTS or the INDEX.


The CONTENTS, at the front of the book, lists the chapters in the order that they appear. On first getting the book, we suggest that you review this list of CONTENTS.

The INDEX, at the back of the book, lists all of the important topics covered, in alphabetical order.

---

This book is organized mostly according to methods, aids, and ideas for learning, rather than according to specific health topics.

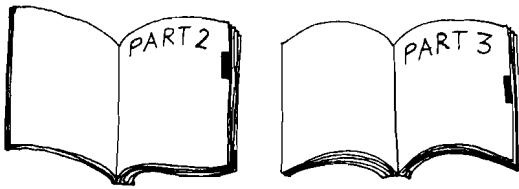
For example, information about ‘oral rehydration’ appears in several different chapters: “Looking at Learning and Teaching,” “Appropriate and Inappropriate Technology,” and “Children as Health Workers.” If you are planning a class or activity on oral rehydration, you may want to look up all 3 of these references. So check the INDEX.

 For more suggestions on how to use this book, see the inside of the back cover.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

(continued)

This book is arranged into 5 major parts, each with a brief introduction. To make them easier to find, the introductory pages of each part are marked with a black strip at different heights along the outer margin. The margins of the Contents and Index pages are also lined with black.



By looking at the edges of the book, you can see where each part begins.

### Page numbering:

Pages are numbered according to the sections or chapters they are in. In each chapter or section, page numbering starts again from page 1. In the top outer corner of each page, you will see numbers like these:

**Front-3**, or **4-12**, or **Part Two-7**

The first word or number in **dark letters** is the section or the chapter number. The last number is the page number of that particular section or chapter. Thus, **4-12** means **Chapter 4**, page 12. At first this numbering system may seem confusing. But it will make it easier for us to add more pages or rearrange chapters in future editions.

### Language:

We have tried to keep language simple. Where difficult words are used, we try to explain them, or to use them in such a way that the meaning is clear.

Sometimes we put difficult words in *italics (letters like these)*. And sometimes the word is explained in small letters at the bottom of the page, after an **asterisk** \*.

### Social viewpoint:

In this book we take a strong social position in favor of the poor. Recognizing that health is closely linked with self-reliance and politics, we have combined discussion of social factors with practical aspects of health education.

To better understand our social viewpoint and the practical experiences on which it is based, we suggest that you start by reading the front matter—the introduction (**Front-1**) and “Why This Book Is So Political” (**Front-7**). Chapter 1, “Looking at Learning and Teaching,” will also help you put the rest of the book in perspective.

---

\***Asterisk**: This little star is called an asterisk. It is used to indicate that there is more information about a word or idea at the bottom of the page.

# CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	<b>Front-1</b>
WARNING . . . . .	<b>Front-5</b>
WHY THIS BOOK IS SO POLITICAL . . . . .	<b>Front-7</b>
<b>PART ONE: APPROACHES AND PLANS</b>	
Chapter 1: Looking at Learning and Teaching . . . . .	<b>1-1 to 1-30</b>
Chapter 2: Selecting Health Workers, Instructors, and Advisers . . . . .	<b>2-1 to 2-18</b>
Chapter 3: Planning a Training Program . . . . .	<b>3-1 to 3-32</b>
Chapter 4: Getting off to a Good Start . . . . .	<b>4-1 to 4-14</b>
Chapter 5: Planning a Class . . . . .	<b>5-1 to 5-18</b>
Chapter 6: Learning and Working with the Community . . . . .	<b>6-1 to 6-20</b>
Chapter 7: Helping People Look at Their Customs and Beliefs . . . . .	<b>7-1 to 7-13</b>
Chapter 8: Practice in Attending the Sick . . . . .	<b>8-1 to 8-16</b>
Chapter 9: Examinations and Evaluation as a Learning Process . . . . .	<b>9-1 to 9-22</b>
Chapter 10: Follow-up, Support, and Continued Learning . . . . .	<b>10-1 to 10-18</b>
<b>PART TWO: LEARNING THROUGH SEEING, DOING, AND THINKING</b>	
Chapter 11: Making and Using Teaching Aids . . . . .	<b>11-1 to 11-32</b>
Chapter 12: Learning to Make, Take, and Use Pictures . . . . .	<b>12-1 to 12-22</b>
Chapter 13: Story Telling . . . . .	<b>13-1 to 13-14</b>
Chapter 14: Role Playing . . . . .	<b>14-1 to 14-14</b>
Chapter 15: Appropriate and Inappropriate Technology . . . . .	<b>15-1 to 15-18</b>
Chapter 16: Homemade, Low-Cost Equipment and Written Materials . . . . .	<b>16-1 to 16-20</b>
Chapter 17: Solving Problems Step by Step (Scientific Method) . . . . .	<b>17-1 to 17-14</b>
Chapter 18: Learning to Use Medicines Sensibly . . . . .	<b>18-1 to 18-14</b>
Chapter 19: Aids for Learning to Use Medicines and Equipment . . . . .	<b>19-1 to 19-18</b>
<b>PART THREE: LEARNING TO USE THE BOOK, <i>WHERE THERE IS NO DOCTOR</i></b>	
Chapter 20: Using the Contents, Index, Page References, and Vocabulary . . . . .	<b>20-1 to 20-12</b>
Chapter 21: Practice Using Guides, Charts, and Record Sheets . . . . .	<b>21-1 to 21-18</b>
<b>PART FOUR: ACTIVITIES WITH MOTHERS AND CHILDREN</b>	
Chapter 22: Pregnant Women, Mothers, and Young Children . . . . .	<b>22-1 to 22-20</b>
Chapter 23: The Politics of Family Planning . . . . .	<b>23-1 to 23-10</b>
Chapter 24: Children as Health Workers . . . . .	<b>24-1 to 24-30</b>
<b>PART FIVE: HEALTH IN RELATION TO FOOD, LAND, AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS</b>	
Chapter 25: Food First . . . . .	<b>25-1 to 25-44</b>
Chapter 26: Looking at How Human Relations Affect Health . . . . .	<b>26-1 to 26-38</b>
Chapter 27: Ways to Get People Thinking and Acting: Village Theater and Puppet Shows . . . . .	<b>27-1 to 27-39</b>
A CALL FOR COURAGE AND CAUTION . . . . .	<b>Back-1</b>
ADDRESSES FOR TEACHING MATERIALS . . . . .	<b>Back-3</b>
INDEX . . . . .	<b>Back-5</b>
ABOUT PROJECT PIAXTLA AND THE AUTHORS . . . . .	<b>Back-13</b>
OTHER BOOKS BY THE HESPERIAN FOUNDATION . . . . .	<b>Back-16</b>