Community and Media Outreach as Tools in the Environmental Cleanup Program Toolbox

Maude Bullock, ORC Macro International
Cynthia Casey, Smallbear Inc
Background

- DoD is working to complete all cleanup by 2014
- This will take both innovative technical and sociological approaches
- Cleanup projects do not take place in a vacuum
  - adjacent communities are affected
  - economic stability may be an issue
  - health and safety issues may be factors regardless of socio-economic status
“People Problems” Can Cause Big Problems

People problems are often not addressed until they become obstacles

- Can slow projects to a virtual standstill
- Tight schedules slip
- Costs can be significant
- Technical decision alone making cannot solve these problems
What Must be Recognized

- Sound technical solutions must be properly conveyed
- The Restoration Advisory Board may not be adequately inclusive
- Perceptions drive reality
- Managers must be champions of community and media outreach programs
Sound technical solutions must be properly conveyed.

- provide information at community events
- hosting information fairs
- use plain English and provide appropriate translation into other languages
- appearing on local TV and radio
The Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) May not be Adequately Inclusive

- The RAB as the primary two way communication vehicle assumes
  - community is non-adversarial
  - members will be primarily English speaking
  - members will reflect the community at large
  - members will be able to understand the information provided
  - the body will be functional

- When the assumptions are not true
  - expand beyond the RAB
  - as applicable reach out to monolingual and mono-cultural communities
  - reach out to community based organizations in and outside the community, including “faith based” organizations
Community Based Organizations and Their Associated Populations (Hunters Point Naval Shipyard Cleanup)

Outside Organizations

Bayview/Hunters Point Community

Various Bayview CBO's

African American

Hispanics
- Mexican
- Puerto Rico
- Central and South America

Asian
- Chinese
- Vietnamese
- Filipino

Pacific Islanders
- Samoans
- Tongans

Caucasian

Greenpeace of California

SLUG

Black Leadership Forum

NCLR

PINA

AAEC
African American Ecumenical Council

AGIA
Advocate for Grassroots Initiative Access

APACC
Asian Pacific American Community Center

CAA
Chinese for Affirmative Action

CSC
Chinese Six Companies (Chinese Family Benevolent Associations)

HCC
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

NAACP
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NCLR
National Council of Laraza

PINA
Pacific Island Nurses Association

SLUG
SF League of Urban Gardens
Perceptions Drive Reality

- Understand your target audience
- Multiple approaches may be necessary
- Enlisting help from media and community outreach consults and community leaders when:
  - the cleanup project has controversial elements
  - community activists are engaged and opposed to the Military’s approach
  - the local media is engaged, particularly the advocacy press and opposed to the Military’s approach
  - community leaders and/or vocal residents are opposed to the Military’s approach
- An effective media outreach plan should include:
  - media action timeline
  - issuance of press releases, public service announcements, etc.
  - placement of articles in local newspapers
  - responding quickly to articles/editorials
  - inviting the press to events
  - work to establish positive relationships
Perceptions (cont)

- A distrustful community tends to stay that way
- Some community leaders and/or vocal residents may be advocating mistrust
- Work to win over community leaders that will demonstrate a willingness to listen
- Some other things to consider:
  - the use of community leaders as consultants (however no conflicts of interest)
  - participate in meetings hosted by community leaders or co-host meetings
  - provide facility tours
  - expeditiously respond to queries
  - engage GateKeepers and Grass Roots leaders
GateKeepers vs. Grass Roots

Gate Keepers provide visibility for the issues, product endorsement, and engage other Gate Keepers for Credibility.

GATE KEEPERS
Political Leaders, major CBO Directors, major Business Leaders, Clergy

GRASS ROOTS
Community Activists, Tenant Associations

Action
Grass Roots work for community mobilization
Managers Must Champion Outreach Programs

- Innovative outreach approaches often represent uncharted waters
- Community Relations may be adequate - works best when there is little controversy and the community is accepting of the information provided
- Community Outreach may be necessary - proactively engages the community in the communication process
Managers (cont)

- Why would management want to champion outreach programs
  - community is adversarial
  - elected officials involved
  - environmental activists are engaged and opposing
  - media is engaged in biased reporting
Community and Media Outreach Programs can be effective tools; to maximize effectiveness the following must occur:

- Programs must be proactive
- Acknowledge and value the human factor
- Working with diverse communities requires cultural competence
- Keep the lines of communication open between all staff
- Agree on the degree of independence of any consultants
- Community and media outreach plans must address diversity issues