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Strengthening the management of UNICEF

A report by the Executive Director

Contents

	<u>Paragraphs</u>
Introduction	1 - 7
Improving headquarters management and support to the field	8 - 32
Executive staff co-ordination	8 - 10
Programming	11 - 15
Personnel	16 - 20
Budget preparation and control	21 - 23
Service to the field on office organization and management	24 - 25
Supply operations	26 - 27
Finances	28 - 29
Programme funding	30
Information activities	31
Greeting Card Operation	32
Regional office organization	33
Field/headquarters sharing of knowledge and experience	34 - 37
Staffing	38 - 43
Women	38 - 42
Staff from developing countries	43

/...

Contents (continued)

Annexes

	<u>Page</u>
Annex I - Total UNICEF staff and number and per cent female by category, as of 31 December 1976	13
Annex II - UNICEF general service staff and number and per cent female, by duty station, as of 31 December 1976	14
Annex III - UNICEF international professional staff female compared to total, by grade level, as of 31 December 1974 - 1976	15
Annex IV - UNICEF international professional staff: promotion of females compared to total staff promotions, by grade level, 1974 - 1976	16
Annex V - Total UNICEF staff by number and per cent from developing countries, by category, as of 31 December 1976	17
Annex VI - UNICEF international professional staff from developing countries compared to total, by grade level, as of 31 December 1974 - 1976	18

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its 1975 session, the Board reviewed the results of a management survey and endorsed the lines of action proposed by the Executive Director to strengthen the management of UNICEF. The Executive Director presented a progress report to the 1976 Board session on the actions he had taken and the directions he intended to follow (E/ICEF/AB/L.166). This report was noted by the Board with appreciation and approval (E/ICEF/644, paras. 147-151). The present report is a follow-up of last year's report.
2. In approving the main lines of action proposed by the Executive Director, to be completed over a three-year period, the Executive Board felt that they should not distract UNICEF from performing its primary task of bringing aid to children; rather, management changes should proceed in a way which would contribute to this objective (E/ICEF/639, paras. 121 and 126). This view is fully shared by the Executive Director and guided him in the steps he has taken.
3. The management developments in the last year have been directed to several interrelated and mutually supporting objectives: improving co-ordination and communications within headquarters, and between headquarters and field; providing increased headquarters' support to the field; improving personnel management; and refining financial controls and monitoring.
4. As indicated below, a number of specific measures have been taken during the year in this direction. Some of these are improvements and extensions in a more systematic way of efforts begun earlier (e.g. executive staff co-ordination and various forms of headquarters' support and service to the field). Other efforts mark the beginnings of relatively new approaches (e.g. "zero-base budgeting" and "knowledge networks").
5. In several important areas, especially personnel administration and programme management, a better organizational and personnel base is being created, and it is from this base that further specific measures can now be initiated. In a number of instances it will take time for them to have a substantial effect, in part because of their long-term nature, and in part because of the need to give priority to the day-to-day demands with which the secretariat is faced. Moreover, a number of the measures are only just starting to work, and it is inevitable that as they are tested, modifications and refinements will have to be made.
6. There are a number of additional emphases which the Executive Director hopes to pursue in the course of the next year which are only briefly touched upon in this report. These include: improving the staff evaluation process at all levels, including evaluation of senior personnel; and dealing with the relationships which should be in effect, taking cost effectiveness into account, between representatives' offices and regional offices, and also between representatives' offices and headquarters.

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7. The Executive Director has been fortunate in having available the services of a senior consultant, Dr. Herman Stein, to advise him in the period of planning and initial organizational change. Dr. Stein will continue in this capacity until the summer of 1977, when he must return to previous commitments.

#### IMPROVING HEADQUARTERS MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT TO THE FIELD

##### Executive staff co-ordination

8. At the last Board session the Executive Director stated that he intended to make further efforts to improve co-ordination and communications within headquarters, and a number of steps have been taken in this direction during the course of the year.

9. Executive staff meetings, chaired by the Executive Director and held weekly at headquarters, are an important means for exchange of essential information among the Executive Director's office and headquarters' divisions, and for co-ordination of interdivisional action. Three interdivisional review groups have also been established at headquarters for purposes of co-ordination and more systematic analysis of trends in UNICEF operations: external relations, management and programme. The external relations group, chaired by the Executive Director, reviews policy and developments in such matters as contributions, direction of information activities, issues in interpretation of UNICEF, and relationships with international agencies. The management group, chaired by the Senior Deputy Executive Director, reviews such subjects as budget preparation and performance, personnel policy, financial monitoring, and the management of divisions and field offices. The programme group, chaired by the Deputy Executive Director (Programmes), includes in its review the direction and implementation of assistance policy, over-all project status and evaluation and programme relationships with governments and other agencies in the United Nations system.

10. The post of Associate Director for Organization and Management included in the 1977 budget, is still to be filled. The incumbent will be responsible for identifying issues that cut across more than one division and seeing that they are appropriately considered and resolved; he will also be principally responsible for co-ordinating communication on interdivisional and policy matters with the Director of the Office for Europe.

##### Programming

11. Efforts are under way to strengthen headquarters support of programming. This includes the provision of more direct and extensive support to the field along with increasing the efficiency of the programme operation.

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12. A Director of the Programme Division (the post for which is to be established as of 1 April 1977) will be responsible for the organization, supervision, and orientation of the Division, the assessment and disposition of its personnel, its work with the field organization and programmes, and its relations with other divisions. On major issues of policy and organizational change there will be consultation between the Director of the Programme Division and the Deputy Executive Director (Programmes). Released from the duties of management of the Programme Division, the Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) will have more time for consultations in the field where he can help assess programme developments, relations with governments and staffing situations. He will also be in a better position to undertake certain major responsibilities for the Executive Director, including negotiations with other agencies in the United Nations system and high-level contacts with governments.

13. The Programme Division will undertake a detailed review of current operational practices and procedures related to programming in order to simplify and improve them. This will include consideration of such matters as adaptation of the basic assistance list system to present circumstances, operational relations between the Division and field offices and the introduction of electronic data processing in certain areas of programming. Emphasis will also be placed on developing greater co-ordination between the geographic and functional units in the Division. A study of the problems of programme implementation will be undertaken jointly by the Division and the Internal Audit Service.

14. To facilitate co-ordination between programme and supply and logistics matters and management of the financial plan, regular meetings are held at headquarters involving the Supply, Comptroller's and Programme Divisions and the Internal Audit Service.

#### Programme evaluation

15. In the 1976 Board review of evaluative activities, it was agreed that there should be more headquarters' support to field offices and more systematic training of UNICEF programme staff in project preparation and assessment. Action was taken on both fronts during 1976 by the Division through its programme analysis and evaluation group. The Division has participated with UNICEF field staff in programme reviews at the country level; developed criteria for analysis of programme proposals; and conducted a series of workshops on the programming process, with emphasis on programme preparation and design. Materials for the workshop were prepared in co-operation with other headquarters' units (Personnel Administration, Supply and Internal Audit Service). The systematic training of UNICEF programme staff in project preparation and assessment will be expanded. A consultant joined the Division in October 1976 to help formulate and implement a detailed programme for supporting evaluative activities at the country level, and experience obtained in the countries will be diffused through workshops at regional staff meetings.

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## Personnel

### Reorganization of Personnel Administration Division

16. A Personnel Administration Division was established just prior to the last Board session (April 1976) which included all the functions of the previous Administration Division but with an emphasis on combining professional personnel management with experience in field conditions. During the course of the year a number of steps were taken toward re-inforcing the personnel management function and increasing the capacity of the Division in such areas as manpower planning, staff development, training, evaluation and counselling. It is clear that the process of strengthening the personnel function will necessarily be an evolving one, continuing over an extended period of time. One of the long-term objectives is to help improve the staff management capability in field offices and thus gradually to decentralize many of the functions in this area.

17. In February 1977 the Division was organized into five sections: recruitment and placement; staff development and training; personnel services; budget; and administrative services. The recruitment and placement section, in addition to responsibility for recruitment, maintains a staff rotation plan. The 1978 budget estimates provide for an assistant recruitment and placement officer for this section. The staff development and training section is responsible for planning to meet UNICEF's staffing requirements; for developing and maintaining staff evaluation programmes and establishing career paths; and for the development of a staff training programme. A staff development and training officer, to head this office, authorized in the 1976 budget estimates, began his duties in February 1977. The personnel services section is concerned with all aspects of contracts, benefits and allowances. The 1978 budget estimates provide for a personnel services officer to head this section. The budget section was strengthened in 1976 by the addition of a budget officer post, and its current work is referred to below (paras. 21-23). The work of the Administrative Services Section remains unchanged.

### Training

18. The increased emphasis on staff training is apparent throughout this report. The annual senior staff interregional seminar which previously had been held in Europe or the United States will take place in the field for the first time in 1977. To be held at the Asian Development Institute in Bangkok, it will also include visits by the participants to UNICEF-assisted projects in one to four countries in Asia. Training workshops are increasingly becoming part of annual regional staff meetings; training workshops have also been held by a number of field offices for their own staff.

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19. A main task for the newly established training unit (see para. 17 above) will be to establish priorities for meeting those training needs which are most basic and urgent. In the area of language training in the field, an emphasis will be placed on learning of local languages. Briefing and orientation programmes will be developed for all levels of UNICEF staff. Wherever possible, the training activities will involve collaboration with other agencies in the United Nations system, particularly UNDP field offices. Efforts will be made to take more advantage of training possibilities offered by regional development and training institutions.

#### Staff review

20. Further experience is being gained with the system of appointment and promotion committees and annual staff review established in 1975. In addition to offering valuable recommendations for the career development of individual staff members, the committees, which include field representation, have made suggestions, arising out of their consideration of particular cases, bearing on personnel policy issues and the development of clearer and more uniform standards. The committees have also made suggestions on procedural matters to improve the quality of review process. These are helpful to the Division of Personnel Administration, contributing to the establishment of the work priorities of the Division.

#### Budget preparation and control

21. The process continues of fostering greater cost-consciousness and monitoring of budget expenditure. This is helped by the format of the budget which now links cost components for each field office: total programme aid in its various forms, project personnel, international and national staff, short-term professional personnel, local operating costs and all other forms of programme support services. In the evaluation of senior staff, more weight will be given to the economy and effectiveness of the budgetary resources they administer.

22. In the development of the 1978 budget estimates, a start has been made in the application of the concept of the "zero-base" budget. This involves a justification by each unit of all posts and other costs requested each year rather than a justification only of increases requested. A more systematic application of this concept will be in effect in future budget formulation, and this should make possible the more effective use of existing staff whose original duties may have changed or become unnecessary so that they can be reassigned to other functions.

23. The field offices will be receiving increasing support from the Division of Personnel Administration and the Internal Audit Service in the budget process. This will include assistance in setting up procedures for the continuous monitoring and control of expenditures for the various

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components of the budget and the better preparation of analyses to accompany budget submissions to headquarters. Related to this will be management reviews which will be undertaken in selected offices to determine requirements in relation to workload.

Service to the field on office organization and management

24. The Internal Audit Service, in addition to its audit of programmes and accounts, is increasing its management audits. Such audits normally include a review of UNICEF programme inputs to a selected project or projects and a management review of office controls, organization and workload. The annual work plan of the Internal Audit Service now includes audit participation in selected country programme reviews at the country level. Advisory services provided by traveling internal auditors consist of assistance in organizational and managerial matters and on-the-job training of field staff in their operational responsibilities.

25. Headquarters has provided advice and support to the heads of two large offices (Bangladesh and India) and several other offices in planning some reorganization of their offices to meet the changing conditions. This type of service on management and organization problems, including on-the-spot help, will continue to be made available to field offices and may include persons from the region as well as headquarters.

Supply operations

26. The Supply Division is developing a field service programme which will assist field offices in specifications development and preparation of supply lists; provision of general logistics advice and training; and solution of specific problems. A roster of ten to twelve senior staff with specialized experience will be available to field offices for this purpose. A more systematic attempt is being made to encourage field staff members to visit the Supply Division at its headquarters, Geneva and Copenhagen locations in connexion with their other travel.

27. In order to provide more training for field staff in supply and logistic matters, to improve communication, and to provide the Supply Division with greater feedback on field experience, a series of supply workshops have been held in the field and more are planned. A field supply and logistics training officer is currently being recruited whose duties will include the planning and servicing of the workshops.

Finances

28. Further steps were taken during the year to refine and extend the safeguards required for planning and monitoring the interrelations between revenue, the level of programme implementation and the ability to respond to new requests. This included the development by the Comptroller's Division of improved and new electronic data processing, some reorganization of programme accounting and the training of local field staff in pre-coding and updating of current transactions.

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29. To assist the Comptroller in the management of interest-bearing deposits, an investment advisory committee has been established with membership from senior headquarters' staff. The committee, which can draw upon advisory services from the outside, reviews such matters as cash flow, the selection of banks, currency restrictions and problem situations.

#### Programme funding

30. During the course of the year, a review was undertaken of the headquarters organization and staffing for fund-raising and some reorganization has taken place, with certain aspects still under study. The Special Adviser to the Executive Director directs a Programme Funding Office which, in addition to its concern with contributions to general resources has a special projects unit. Continuous contact is maintained with the Programme, Comptroller's, and Information Divisions and Office for Europe.

#### Information activities

31. The Information Division has undertaken a number of steps to improve the management of its activities. This includes the development of guidelines for the co-ordination of information activities of headquarters and the Office for Europe, and more frequent meetings with information staff of UNICEF National Committees, including regularly scheduled workshops with some of them. Guidelines and a control point have been established in the Division to co-ordinate all information-related field visits by media, officials from National Committees, non-governmental organizations, and UNICEF staff. In order to disseminate experience with project support communications (PSC), a regular newsletter is issued to UNICEF field staff. Workshops on PSC for UNICEF have been held in Africa and Asia, and more will be held in the future.

#### Greeting Card Operation

32. Accounting procedures were revised in the Greeting Card Operation, to make possible better control of expenditures and of planning to control costs per product and per operation, as well as to provide other information for decision-making. The format of budget estimates presented to the Board at this session has been changed to conform with this new cost-accounting system. New forms have been established to record all actions related to production, including ordering by the National Committees and other sales outlets. Responsibilities within the GCO have been redefined and redistributed to take into account the establishment of a marketing section. 1/

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1/ Fuller information on the management of the Greeting Card Operation is contained in the budget estimates submitted to the current Board session (E/ICEF/AB/L.175).

#### REGIONAL OFFICE ORGANIZATION

33. As was reported to the Board last year, most of the Regional Directors are increasingly functioning as senior professional colleagues in relation to the UNICEF representatives in their region, as well as undertaking special responsibilities relating to the region as a whole. The regional offices provide specialist staff to country and area offices as required to support their work and provide advice to governments. In addition, most of the regional offices have some operational programme responsibilities, functioning as a country office for some of the countries in their region. Because of geographic and other factors, however, the extent to which these direct programme responsibilities have been carried out by the various regional offices has differed. One of the tasks in the period ahead is to review the situation relating to each regional office taking into account the specific circumstances in each case, in order to arrive at organizational arrangements best suited to the current situation and changing future requirements.

#### FIELD/HEADQUARTERS SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

34. Efforts are being made to draw more fully on the practical experience and knowledge gained by various field offices and staff in order to provide a body of systematic experience that could be made available elsewhere in the organization and contribute to the professional capabilities of the staff.

35. Field directors' meetings are now held at headquarters in the autumn, as well as before or after the annual Board session. An additional means for determining areas of concern as seen by the field is a one-week "field group" working session held annually with about ten participants on a rotating basis.

36. Field offices have been encouraged to initiate "lateral" exchanges with each other through correspondence and, in some instances, inter-country and interregional visits for specific purposes. An experimental new approach to preparing a report to the Board was undertaken with a workshop in Lusaka, Zambia in January 1977 in the field of services to children in disadvantaged urban areas. Participants included eight field staff from various regions with experience in this area, meeting for one week with two headquarters' staff and a consultant. <sup>2/</sup> The workshop will now constitute the starting basis for a continuing "knowledge network" on the subject. Similar workshops are envisaged for programmes focused on the young child and on services for women benefiting children.

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<sup>2/</sup> The report E/ICEF/P/L.1653) is on the agenda of the current session of the Programme Committee.

37. A meeting will be held in June 1977 in Indonesia with participation by three field offices, each from a different region, and headquarters staff to plan a "knowledge centre" to develop a work programme and operational guidelines for activities related to the concept of basic services. Experience with this approach will be helpful in decisions on whether to move along similar lines in other programme fields.

### STAFFING 3/

#### Women

38. Efforts continue to recruit more women as professional positions become vacant, to identify women in the organization capable of assuming larger responsibilities and to expand training opportunities for women.

39. At the end of 1976, UNICEF had 605 women staff members, over one-third of the total staff. They constituted almost one-fifth of the international professional and national officers, staff, and 9 per cent of project personnel. In general service they comprised two-fifths of the staff (annex I). Over one-fourth of the staff in field offices were women (annex II).

40. Progress has been made in increasing the number of women in professional positions (annex III). The percentage of women in the international professional staff rose from 14.0 per cent at the end of 1974 to 16.7 per cent at the end of 1975, and to 19.5 per cent at the end of 1976. By the end of 1976, there were 60 women in international professional posts. There was a net increase of nine women in professional posts, although the net increase in total professional posts during the year was three. In 1975 when there was a net increase in total professional posts of 30, the increase of women in professional posts was 11.

41. There has likewise been an increase in women in senior level posts (P-5 and above). The percentage of women in senior level posts rose from 2.3 per cent at the end of 1974 to 4.3 per cent at the end of 1975 and to 7.9 per cent at the end of 1976. At the end of 1974, there were two women in senior level posts; this increased to four women at the end of 1975 and eight women at the end of 1976. As is indicated in annex III, increases have also taken place in posts occupied by women in the intermediate (P-3/P-4) and junior professional level (P-1/P-2).

42. This progress has, in part, reflected promotions of women. In 1975 and 1976, although women occupied approximately 20 per cent of the international professional posts, close to 30 per cent of the total promotions went to women. In promotions to the senior level, or within

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3/ All the staffing figures given include the Greeting Card Operation.

the senior level, 14.8 per cent of promotions went to women. This compares to 5.5 per cent in 1975 and none in 1974 (annex IV). The percentage of promotions to, or within, the intermediate and junior levels were about the same in 1976 as in the previous two years.

Staff from developing countries

43. Of the total number of 1,766 UNICEF staff at the end of 1976, 1,200 or 68.0 per cent were from developing countries. Of the 412 long-term professional UNICEF staff (international professional and national officers), 187 or 45.4 per cent were from developing countries. Of the international professional staff, 28.9 were from developing countries (annex V). Staff from developing countries accounted for about 25 to 30 per cent of each grade level of international professional personnel (annex IV).

Annex ITotal UNICEF staff and number and per cent female  
by category, as of 31 December 1976

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Female</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
International professional staff	308	60	19.5
National officers	104	19	18.3
Project personnel	86	8	9.3
General service	<u>1 268</u>	<u>518</u>	<u>40.9</u>
TOTAL	<u>1 766</u>	<u>607</u>	<u>34.3</u>

Annex II

UNICEF general service staff and number and per cent  
 female, by duty station, as of 31 December 1976

	1976			1975		
	Total	Female	Per cent female	Total	Female	Per cent female
<u>General service</u>						
New York and Geneva	318	251	78.9	299	235	78.6
Copenhagen, Tokyo, Chelmsford, Sydney, Mulhouse	45	26	57.8	45	27	60.0
Field offices	<u>905</u>	<u>241</u>	<u>26.6</u>	<u>758</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>27.2</u>
TOTAL	<u>1 268</u>	<u>518</u>	<u>40.5</u>	<u>1 102</u>	<u>468</u>	<u>42.5</u>

Annex IIIUNICEF international professional staff, female compared  
to total, by grade level, as of 31 December 1974-1976

	<u>Total staff</u>	<u>Of which female</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
<u>1976</u>			
Junior level (P1-P2)	52	24	46.2
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	155	28	18.1
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>101</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7.9</u>
TOTAL	308	60	19.5
<u>1975</u>			
Junior level (P1-P2)	52	22	42.3
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	159	25	15.7
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>94</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4.3</u>
TOTAL	305	51	16.7
<u>1974</u>			
Junior level (P1-P2)	45	19	42.2
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	145	18	12.4
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>88</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2.3</u>
TOTAL	278	39	14.0

Annex IVUNICEF international professional staff: promotion of females  
compared to total staff promotions, by grade level, 1974-1976 a/

	<u>Total staff</u>	<u>Total promotions</u>		<u>Female promotions</u>		<u>Percentage of promotions that are female</u>
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>	
<u>1976</u>						
Junior level (P1-P2)	52	9	17.3	6	11.5	66.7
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	155	18	11.6	5	3.2	27.8
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>101</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>26.7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>14.8</u>
TOTAL	308	54	17.5	15	4.9	27.8
<u>1975</u>						
Junior level (P1-P2)	52	11	21.2	8	15.4	72.7
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	159	30	18.9	9	5.7	30.0
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>94</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19.1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>5.5</u>
TOTAL	305	59	19.3	18	5.9	30.5
<u>1974</u>						
Junior level (P1-P2)	45	3	6.7	2	4.4	66.7
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	145	16	11.0	5	3.4	31.3
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>88</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>26.1</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
TOTAL	278	42	15.1	7	2.5	16.7

a/ Promotions during the course of the year to the grade level indicated, or promotions within the level.

Annex VTotal UNICEF staff and number and per cent from  
developing countries, by category, as of 31 December 1976

<u>Category</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>From developing countries</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
International professional staff	308	89	28.9
National officers	<u>104</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>94.2</u>
TOTAL long-term professional staff (national and inter- national)	412	187	45.5
Project personnel	86	29	33.7
General service	<u>1 268</u>	<u>984</u>	<u>77.6</u>
TOTAL staff	<u><u>1 766</u></u>	<u><u>1 200</u></u>	<u><u>68.0</u></u>

Annex VIUNICEF international professional staff from developing countries compared to total, by grade level, as of 31 December 1974-1976

	<u>Total staff</u>	<u>From developing countries</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Per cent</u>
<u>1976</u>			
Junior level (P1-P2)	52	15	28.8
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	155	47	30.3
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>101</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>26.7</u>
TOTAL	308	89	28.9
<u>1975</u>			
Junior level (P1-P2)	52	13	25.0
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	159	44	27.7
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>94</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29.8</u>
TOTAL	305	85	27.9
<u>1974</u>			
Junior level (P1-P2)	45	10	22.2
Intermediate level (P3-P4)	145	43	29.7
Senior level (P5 and above)	<u>88</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>26.1</u>
TOTAL	278	76	27.3

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