

Chapter 8

Development and the 'Whole' Child

In January 1961 the United Nations resolved that the decade of the sixties would be the Decade of Development. The actual declaration was made by President John F. Kennedy, the contemporary figure who most personified the new spirit in international affairs. The first US President since Harry Truman to identify himself closely with the fate of people in underdeveloped countries, Kennedy went to the UN General Assembly immediately after his inaugural address to launch the first Development Decade.

The declaration was an expression of commitment to a new framework of international economic relations, a framework which took account of a Third World. This term designated a group of countries trying to assert a political and psychological distance from the Old World and the New, belonging neither to the Western alliance nor the Eastern bloc. This new force in geopolitics had begun to stir in the early 1950s, making its formal entry onto the world stage in April 1955 when President Sukarno of Indonesia invited the leaders of twenty-nine African and Asian countries to a conference in Bandung. The occasion midwifed the political association of the 'non-aligned'; the standing of its leading figures—men such as Jawaharlal Nehru of India and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana—helped to unleash a tide of sentiment in favour of countries emerging from a status of dependence on the old Imperial powers and taking on the character of new nation-states.

The process was at its most dramatic in Africa. During the late 1950s, the 'winds of change'—a phrase immortalized by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan of Britain—blew down the continent in stormy gusts. As the appetite among African peoples for political independence steadily grew, the British, French and Belgian colonial authorities began to withdraw. By the end of the decade, the exit of the European powers had gathered such speed that what less than a century ago had been the European scramble to gain possession of large chunks of territory on the continent was now mirrored by a scramble to give them up.

The United Nations, where Dag Hammerskjold had raised high the flag in support of the self-determination of African peoples, provided a useful brokerage service for the elaboration of constitutions and other necessary handover arrangements. The watershed year was 1960, which, at the UN,

was known as The Year of Africa: fourteen former French colonies, the Belgian Congo, Somalia and Nigeria all achieved independence, and UN membership. Within the next few years, most of the rest followed suit. At the end of the critical phase of decolonization, only a few bastions of colonial power remained, mostly in the southern part of the African continent.

Decolonization changed the course of international affairs, altering not only the geographical, political and strategic map, but setting up new vibrations between the nations. It was a period of excitement and hope, a time in which the new kinds of links being forged within the community of free peoples were full of promise that the age of international peace and prosperity was finally at hand. The sense of euphoria was fuelled by the emergence of so many new countries and the sense that youthful vigour unfettered by the past was striding onto the world stage. But to emerge, the countries of the Third World must also develop.

In many, industrialization was still in a primitive phase. The majority of their populations—which together outstripped those of both the other ‘worlds’—lived in grinding poverty. They must shake off this poverty along with their colonial status, and to do so they needed capital resources and technical know-how from their richer world neighbours. Thus was born the push for development, a concept which embraced moral and humanitarian fervour along with more conventional notions of political self-determination, investment and materialist expansion.

The UN provided a forum where these new dynamics gained strength. There, the newly independent nations had as much a right to prime time as the geopolitical heavyweights, and their new brand of rhetoric offered a welcome reprieve from that of East-West confrontation. The network of UN organizations had been founded in a burst of almost religious faith that the Allied powers could, through its offices, forestall another global conflagration. At a time when war wounds were fresh and the international climate still very volatile, the most important means of preventing war were seen as diplomacy, disarmament and international peace-keeping. But the almost immediate division of the Allies into two camps upset these prospects. The war in Korea, in which the US invoked UN patronage, revealed its inherent limitations as a peace-broker, and its reputation in that context never truly recovered. Other methods for keeping peace in the world therefore began to gain in importance just as the process of decolonization was gathering momentum.

Against the wishes of the colonial powers, who had reluctantly given in to pressure from the US and the British Dominions, the charter establishing the world body had also talked of ‘the equal rights and self-determination of peoples’, and of the UN’s role in promoting higher standards of living and ‘solutions of international economic, social, health and related problems’ (Article 55).

During the 1950s, the major preoccupation within the UN shifted from international co-operation for mutual security to something very much broader but closely related: international co-operation for an assault on hunger, disease, poverty, economic instability and all the socially and economically disruptive forces likely to give rise to national and international turmoil. In the late 1940s and early 1950s the UN began to flesh out the organs it had devised for this part of its purpose.

Two types of co-operation were envisaged: a transfer of modern scientific know-how, and a transfer of financial resources. The principal sources of the know-how were the UN's specialized agencies, whose task was to tap the best advice and latest technology in a given field and put it at the disposal of member nations in the form of technical assistance.

The specialized agencies had originally been conceived more as universities than as operational consultancies, and they took time to adapt to the challenges facing them in the era of decolonization. All were autonomous from the UN proper with their own charters and governing structures. Coherent co-ordination for the attack on world poverty was not easy. Nonetheless, they were the repositories within the international community of the best scientific and technical wisdom the age could muster, and their usefulness in the new development scenario was therefore self-evident.

Other institutions designed to boost the role of the UN in the provision of technical assistance also began to emerge. In July 1950 the Economic and Social Council, itself in the process of assuming greater importance, set up a mechanism for co-ordinating technical assistance and gathering more resources behind it. This body, the Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (EPTA), represented a joint operation of the UN and several of the specialized agencies, including FAO, ILO, WHO and UNESCO. The funds provided to EPTA by member countries were supplementary to the independent budgets of the specialized agencies although utilized through them; the effect of a common fund was to promote more co-operation and a greater interlocking of their affairs.

In the mid-1950s, an attempt to create a Special UN Fund for Economic Development (SUNFED) foundered because the industrialized countries had no desire to furnish large sums of money to a strong international development authority whose activities they could not control. Here was another indicator of the inherent limitations on what kind of responsibilities the nations were jointly prepared to take on or give up on each other's behalf. In 1957, with the SUNFED proposal still deadlocked, and awareness growing that something more was needed to respond to the economic plight of the up-and-coming parts of the world, a proposal for an alternative joint mechanism, the UN Special Fund, managed to gain approval. Over the course of the next six years, the Special Fund harnessed \$450 million for what was called 'pre-investment'—the thorough checking of what seemed like good ideas for developing fisheries or forests, foundries or

factories before taking the plunge and going ahead with the project in question. EPTA and the Special Fund placed the UN squarely in the forefront of international co-operation for development, partly thanks to the brilliant leadership provided respectively by an Englishman, David Owen, and an American, Paul Hoffman. The two organizations were the joint forerunner of the UN Development Programme, into which they were merged in 1966 under the leadership of the same two principals.

The mechanism within the UN system for the second type of transfer—capital investment—was the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The IBRD, usually known as the World Bank, was set up in 1945 by the international conference which met at Bretton Woods in the US; it was conceived as one means of helping countries to avoid the depressions of the 1920s and 1930s, such potent causes of international tension and breeding grounds for war. The task of the World Bank was to advance loans for projects of importance to a country's overall development; but the terms on which it made loans were not suited to the rather special purpose of investment in countries whose stage of development meant that returns and repayments would not be quickly forthcoming.

Two years later, in 1947, came the US Marshall Plan for European postwar recovery, in which for the first time large injections of public funds were used on concessionary terms to assist sovereign nations with economic regeneration. The invention of 'aid' and its successful application set a precedent; there was even talk of other US 'Marshall Plans' for Asia and Latin America, but the model was unsuitable for parts of the world where initial construction, not reconstruction, was needed.

Meanwhile, as the SUNFED proposal remained grounded, the underdeveloped countries clamoured even more loudly for better access to concessionary finance for major development projects. In 1959, a World Bank affiliate was created: the International Development Association. The IDA offered loans for similar types of projects as those supported by the World Bank, but on particularly 'soft' terms: low or no interest, and long repayment schedules.

Without the support of the US in the new, evolving and expanding international mechanisms for technical assistance and financial investment—and the identification of US foreign policy goals with economic security in the new nations—the movement for international development would have been stillborn. At the turn of the 1960s, as President Kennedy stepped into the White House with a vision of US support to free economically struggling peoples as the underpinning of world peace, US policy was as vital a precondition of the declaration of the first Development Decade as any careful build-up of UN and other multilateral channels.

Development was an idea whose time had come, and 'aid' from the better-off countries to the poorer was the means to bring development about. To many people, the twin ideas of aid and development were

charged with idealism and recompense; they were the means of effecting economic stability and social opportunity in a just and peaceful world. In particular, aid through the unbiased multilateral machinery of the UN seemed an instrument untainted by any blemish of national self-interest of a strategic, political or economic kind, less easily applied with any other goal in mind than improvement in the human condition.

That such improvements were very much needed was beginning to penetrate the mass mind of the public in the industrialized world, courtesy of the spread of communications. Throughout the 1950s, North America and Europe had experienced uninhibited economic and material growth. With mass prosperity in the air, many of those tuned into the international network were stricken by the contrast presented by average living conditions in Asia, Africa and most of Latin America. The spectacle of misery and rural stagnation was familiar to those who had served overseas in their country's armed forces, to diplomats, colonial servants, missionaries, explorers, and anthropologists. But until the age of development, it was not presented in such terms.

Up to this time it was more usual—and this view was not confined to opinion in the Western world—to see the people of warrior tribes and ancient civilizations either as exotics or as primitives; perhaps as a source of fighting power or cheap labour; sometimes as the childlike subjects of missionary zeal. Great civilizations—in the Nile Valley, along the Indus and the Yellow River, in South America—had left their stamp on history, as explorers and archaeologists bore witness. But the societies they had created were outmatched in the crucible of modernization and therefore inferior.

With the advent of the first Development Decade, people in industrialized countries began for the first time to think of the average villager in Asia or Africa as a real person with the same rights and abilities as anyone else, only differing in that he lived in poverty, and that this poverty was susceptible to some kind of external intervention. In the contemporary state of understanding, the idea of social and economic opportunity for every human being with a toehold on the planet struck many people forcibly for the first time. It was a dramatic switch in human thinking.

The new lines of thought, in all their implications, demanded new efforts of study, research and policy formulation. In the years since the war, a new intellectual avant-garde had begun to analyze the root causes of underdevelopment, had produced theories to explain the phenomenon, and had suggested means of overcoming it. Third World development was becoming an academic discipline, an off-shoot of economics and the social sciences, as well as a philosophy and a cause—a rallying cry for anticolonial political radicals and a focus for popular philanthropy. In its deepest sense, the movement for world development projected the idea of national social justice onto an international canvas and dreamed of a world made more

humane by the rearrangement of wealth between the nations. The availability of aid, whatever form it took, was the context of a new international mutual benefit society. If resources of all kinds could be provided on a significant scale, so the reasoning went, the gap between the new prosperity of the industrialized countries and the poverty of the rest could speedily be narrowed.

When the UN declared the Development Decade in January 1961, and set a target of one per cent of gross national product for official Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) from every industrialized country, the idea that a decade would see the task almost through, fantastic as it now seems, did not then appear so far-fetched. Many a twentieth century miracle had been accomplished in less. No-one doubted the sense of urgency emanating from the developing countries or the commitment of their statesmen. The resources and political will were flowing. Within the international community, mechanisms for making it happen had evolved or sprung into life.

No organization which formed a part of that community could remain immune to the new currents of thinking, nor wish to stand to one side and leave the central mission of the era entirely to others. During the next few years, Unicef tried to absorb this maelstrom of ideas and events, and find its own niche in the story of international co-operation for development. The transformation it underwent in the process was the most critical in its history.

Unicef, unlike the specialized agencies with their technical expertise and the banks and Special Fund with their concessionary loans, was not a member of the group of agencies and organizations which loosely constituted the development club.

At the beginning of the Decade, most donors and recipients would not have thought of its operations as within the sightlines of the new perspective. Unicef was still mostly regarded as a beneficent do-gooding organization which distributed goods to distressed mothers and children. The idea still prevailed that free imported supplies, even if they did solve problems of resource and foreign exchange shortage, could not claim more than a subsidiary developmental role.

No-one doubted that Unicef was a thoroughly good thing; practical, reasonably efficient, powered by disinterestedly humanitarian motivation. It had a reputation for expeditious supply procurement and delivery, a role still most visible at times of emergency. Its field and programme operations testified to a fine combination of missionary tradition with the new internationalism. But these attributes did not necessarily confer on it any role in development co-operation.

After more than ten years of activity in the developing countries, there

were many who felt that Unicef's experience and institutional knowledge were more relevant to the mobilization for development than its image as an organization conveyed. The fields in which it was engaged—public health and nutrition—were at the heart of human development, even if they were usually to be found on national balance sheets in the debit column as a drain on resources rather than as a contribution. In several areas—drug and vaccine production, milk conservation, malaria eradication—Unicef's involvement had been developmental according to the standard definition of the term; and in the case of most disease campaigns and nutritional schemes the level of its investment had far exceeded that of either of its senior UN partners, WHO and FAO. Some of its resources had paid for technical advisers; others had been spent on supplies or equipment crucial to the existence of many projects whose mainstream development credentials were impeccable.

Unicef was a much more decentralized organization than the specialized agencies. The original reason for employing staff based in the countries receiving Unicef assistance had been to check that supplies went smoothly along the channels they were supposed to travel and reached the mothers and children for whom they were intended.

From the beginning of its operations most of Unicef's staff had been based in the 'field', and the representatives in country and regional offices had considerable autonomy and room for manoeuvre, not over policy itself but over its application as well. These aspects of its character were very different from the specialized agencies, most of whose expertise was located in their international or regional headquarters. During the fulfillment of their duties, Unicef's field officers had accumulated a good deal of wisdom and understanding about the face of Third World poverty. They had valid judgements to make about the design and execution of programmes, even if they ultimately depended on the finishing technical touches of experts, and they also had a much more continuous relationship than most specialized agency personnel with the government officials charged with day-to-day responsibility for administering them.

One of the critical features of the new way of looking at the problems of Third World poverty—a still somewhat shadowy feature in the early 1960s, but one coming gradually into clearer focus—was that lack of development could not be made good only by technical advice and cheap credit. Even supplemented in advance of project design by 'pre-investment', and following it by the provision of supplies, this formula for development co-operation was woefully inadequate. Problems of poverty have important political, social, cultural and administrative dimensions. Programmes to tackle the poverty of a given community, whether motivated by economic or humanitarian objectives, have to deal with many of the manifestations of poverty at once or each separate programme finds its own purpose frustrated. This was the lesson which had inspired the community development

approach. It was a lesson to which Unicef, because of its decentralized institutional character, was privy at a relatively early stage. Some of those whose technical credentials were outstanding, but who did not have time to adapt their expertise to the local context, spent longer shaking off their preconceived ideas. In this, many officials in the newly-independent countries connived; they were keen to see their countries develop as fast as possible, and ideas about what this development should still look like reflected what passed for progress in Western industrialized society.

Unicef had no role to play in helping create mirror images of Western economic prosperity or social institutions. Its only interest was in finding ways to inject its resources where they might strategically do most for mothers and children. The vision of development it was keen to address was one in which the needs of the inheritors of the nations and the world—the children—took pride of place.

Elsewhere in the United Nations a different initiative for children began to make headway in the late 1950s. This was a protracted campaign to enunciate formally a Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948, singled out children for a special mention; but this provision had not satisfied the non-governmental lobby, which believed that it did not adequately reflect children's unique needs within the family of man.

The idea that children were individuals with rights of their own dated only from the nineteenth century. In most agricultural societies, particularly those living at the edge of subsistence, children were the least productive and therefore the most expendable members of the family. A child who died could be replaced; a weakling child was a drain on family and community. Early childhood therefore was often a survival course, in which the child received the least, rather than the most, food, care and consideration. Having weathered their first few years, children helped with household and agricultural chores to the extent of their ability from the time they could walk until the prescribed moment of maturity. At this juncture, marriage dictated the assumption of adult responsibilities and the cycle began again.

This situation still prevails in much of the rural developing world. Some children endured a far less benign upbringing; this, too, is not uncommon today in certain countries. In their helplessness against adult greed, sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation, children were—are—sometimes treated with great cruelty. The waif, the changeling, the foundling—words no longer in the vocabulary of Western child welfare—used to be familiar products of society. It was common to abandon children if unwanted; at the worst they might be sold into slavery, prostitution, or some other form of bondage.

In Europe and North America, the Industrial Revolution forced society to a reckoning with the fate of its children. Putting children to work at an early age to help support their families bore a very different complexion away from field, furrow, and the tough but not remorseless timetable of rural life. In Britain's mines and factories, children worked between twelve and fifteen hours a day for six days a week, usually in airless, unsanitary and confined conditions. Their bodies were stunted, their eye-sight impaired and their emotional repertory consisted of a catalogue of insults and savagery.

The sufferings of the children of the working poor prompted legal intervention on their behalf. Laws restricting their hours of labour and working conditions paved the way for others concerning their education and protection. As the century progressed, children were removed from adult prisons, special schools were opened for the handicapped and mentally retarded, orphanages run on caring and humanitarian principles were founded, and public education expanded. By the early twentieth century, rapid advances in medicine, nutrition and psychology in the countries reaping the benefits of scientific and technical modernization had fully established the fact that children were not simply miniature adults, but had special characteristics and needs of their own.

The chaos of the first World War was the genesis of the idea of the child above the political and military fray, the idea which underpinned the efforts by Herbert Hoover and others to deliver humanitarian aid to 'innocent victims' on both sides of a conflict. The attempt to carry the idea forward into a binding international agreement was initiated by Eglantyne Jebb, the Englishwoman who had defied the law on the basis that there was no such thing as an 'enemy child'.

In 1923, the organization she had set up in Geneva with the help of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Save the Children International Union (SCIU), drafted and approved the first Declaration of the Rights of the Child. This marked the formal establishment of an international movement for children's rights. A year later, this document was adopted by the League of Nations and consecrated as the World Child Welfare Charter. The preamble to the Declaration repudiated once and for all the conventional wisdom of days gone by: 'Mankind', it stated, 'owes to the child the best that it has to give'. It was a simple document with five clauses, demanding for the child the means for material, moral and spiritual development; special help for the hungry, sick, handicapped and orphaned; first right to relief in times of distress; training to earn a living and protection from exploitation; and an upbringing which would instill in the child a sense of duty towards society.

In 1946, after the second World War, SCIU was merged with the International Association for the Promotion of Child Welfare into the International Union for Child Welfare (IUCW), a non-governmental federation

whose member organizations joined forces to exert pressure at the international level for children's rights. The IUCW began to lobby the Economic and Social Council of the newly formed United Nations to emulate its predecessor, the League, and to endorse the 1924 Declaration. ECOSOC consulted with member governments and the non-governmental organizations involved, and approval was given in principle, subject to modifications and additions which would give more weight to recent developments in the child welfare field. Various drafts emerged, but the question was put on hold in the early 1950s while other covenants on human rights were being formulated. In 1957, the Human Rights Commission of the UN took up the task of reconciling various proposals, which by this stage included the idea of a binding convention rather than simply a statement of principle. In November 1959, they finally brought to the UN a new version of the original Geneva Declaration.

The 1959 Declaration included directly or indirectly all the earlier provisions, and added substantially to them. The first principle prohibited any kind of distinction or discrimination against a child 'on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status'. The new version also confronted the postwar problem of the child refugee: 'The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality'. The other major change was a much fuller elaboration of the child's social needs, including his dependency on his family, and his mother's needs on his behalf. The preamble stated that by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, the child needs special safeguards and care 'before as well as after birth'. Principle Six endorsed his need for love and understanding 'for the full and harmonious development of his personality', and emphasized the family as the best context for his upbringing. His rights to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services were specified, and principle Seven was devoted to his educational needs: 'He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society'.

The unanimous adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child represented another step forward in the continuing story of raising children and their needs higher on the national and international agenda. Unicef did not take any major part in the elaboration of the Declaration or in helping ease its passage; it took the position that helping with implementation, particularly in the fields of health, nutrition and welfare, was where its strengths and interests lay. The UN General Assembly, in its accompanying resolution, affirmed that aid provided by Unicef constituted a practical means of international co-operation to promote the Declaration's aims.

From the point of view of children's protagonists, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child was an important expression of principle. Hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance endured by countless children in the developing countries had been identified as an abrogation of their rights. A holistic view of the child as a creature with a complex of special but interlocking needs, and the right to have those needs addressed, was gaining international ground and intellectual recognition. The thinking simultaneously taking place in Unicef around the theme of children and development was converging in the same direction.

Maurice Pate's *Quo Vadis?* letter to professional staff all around the world asking for their views on where Unicef was going, rightly or wrongly was sent out in the same month as the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. For the past two or three years, what Pate described as a 'powerful ferment of ideas' had been stirring, and he hoped that an exercise in organizational soul-searching might reduce tensions at what was to prove a watershed in Unicef's career.

The 'ferment' was fuelled mainly by two individuals: Dick Heyward and Georges Sicault. Sicault, lately Director-General of Health Services in Morocco, joined Unicef in 1956 and became Deputy Executive Director for Planning in 1957. He brought a seasoned, pragmatic grasp of programme realities, an intellect unburdened by the restraints of orthodoxy, and a distinguished record in public health. Like Heyward, he was deeply caught up in the philosophical currents of the time, and his influence on policy development during the course of the next few years was decisive.

The most powerful of the new ideas was the perception of people's needs as interlocking parts of a puzzle, necessarily to be met only by interlocking responses. The theory of community development was that a multipronged programme with complementary ingredients could tackle the poverty problem of an entire community. By the same token, the interlocking problems affecting children could only be addressed by a mix of complementary ingredients; and as children were not a socially separate group, but intimately dependent on their families and the wider community, interlocking programmes for children must also interlock with those for other family members and the community at large.

The previous ten years of experience in the poorer countries had shown that it was not only very difficult to compartmentalize children's needs, but positively counter-productive. Therefore, according to the vision slowly edged forward by Heyward and Sicault, the needs of the 'whole' child must be taken into account, in the context of the needs of parents, teachers, nurturers and mentors. Unicef must gradually be steered into functioning as if the child was something other than a set of parts, only a few of which were Unicef's concern.

The immediate stumbling block to the realization of this way of seeing things was that certain categories of activity on behalf of children were ineligible for its assistance. The most conspicuous of these was education. The General Assembly resolution establishing Unicef in 1946 had laid down that aid might be given for 'child health purposes generally'.

As the years had gone by, this had been treated very much as a *tabula rasa* on which Unicef's Executive Board might write what it chose, and the definition had proved conveniently elastic. It did not, however, extend to slate, chalk, blackboard, classroom drill or any ingredient of formal schooling. Apart from the family, the school was the social institution with the most influence on the formation of the child, and the shedding of ignorance and superstition was a critical pre-condition of development. Nonetheless, there was considerable resistance to viewing education as within the spirit of 'child health purposes generally'.

In September 1958, it was suggested for the first time to the Executive Board that Unicef should in principle be as willing to promote the intellectual as the physical well-being of the child. The suggestion, made by the delegate of Pakistan, sparked off a controversy between those who had become convinced of the need to consider the 'whole' child in the context of the development of the whole community, and those who regarded Unicef as having a deliberately narrow humanitarian focus which must be fiercely defended from the heresy that children's needs were indistinguishable from those of the wider society.

Up to this point, the theme of interlocking elements within programmes had been exclusively articulated in terms of child health and nutrition programmes. Supplies must interlock with training; both must interlock with technical and logistical expertise. Good weaning practices must interlock with disease control, and both with MCH services. Now, at the suggestion that health and nutrition should interlock with education, the Executive Board balked. Education in the form of stipends for traditional birth attendants and women's club leaders, or flip-charts with pictures of foods for lectures on nutrition, was one thing. Formal schooling was quite another. Opponents believed that the scant resources available for programmes—in the region of \$25 million a year—could not possibly be put to any effective use in primary education.

The schools of just one large developing country would devour the entire amount at a gulp and show little for doing so. Their very inclusion within the categories of Unicef assistance would raise expectations impossible to satisfy, it was reasoned. In spite of the fact that UNESCO supported the notion of working with Unicef in much the same co-operative relationship as was already established with WHO and FAO, the spectre of overlap was raised. The view prevailed that it would be better for Unicef to persevere single-mindedly with its mandate for relieving child hunger and disease, problems for which complete solutions were still far distant.

The battle over whether or not Unicef should assist primary education was a battle about principle. Even the most convinced supporter of the new thesis did not anticipate a sudden rush of projects for classroom extensions and curriculum reform, nor the substitution of cargoes of first-grade primers for skim milk powder. But they did feel that the school classroom and everything academically associated with it should not be categorically excluded from support. Contemporary opinion attached a very high degree of importance to education as the key to economic development. Many Third World countries were not able to absorb large injections of capital because they were not yet equipped with a sufficiently large administrative class or the trained manpower to use it effectively. Education was the magic ingredient which would build up the 'human capital'. This notion of people as a natural resource, like a rich lode of ore waiting to be turned into a profit on investment, was very widespread. Development should give priority to human-capital formation; skills and expertise, conferred by professional diplomas and university degrees, were the building blocks of prosperity.

Such idioms infiltrated even Unicef phraseology. 'Children are a country's most precious resource' was the catch phrase which summarized the new outlook. Unicef's unwillingness to invest intellectually as well as physically in this 'precious resource' weakened its claim to champion the interests of the 'whole' child.

On their side, the developing countries were passionately keen on education in any and every shape and form. Education was the golden passport to a new life. Everywhere, people were hungry for learning. It was not only the economists and theoreticians who saw education and training as magic ingredients, but ordinary people in the town or the village who saw what a white-collar did to transform a man's fortunes. In Africa in particular, where learning institutions were thinnest on the ground, the appetite for education amounted to a craving. Many countries came to independence with no more than a handful of secondary school graduates, let alone the university variety. Maurice Pate, commenting on the UN's Year of Africa, told the Unicef Executive Board: 'Africans everywhere aspire to a future which, they feel, must inevitably be of their own making. . . . It has become increasingly clear that the emphasis in future development plans will be on education, and on economic activities which will contribute to increasing the production potential'. Whatever reservations some of Unicef's leading government donors might feel, the demand from the developing countries for support to education was becoming very difficult to resist by the early 1960s. While international fora resounded with talk of the self-determination of peoples, to refuse to respect a country's own set of priorities for solving their children's problems was distinctly out of tune with the times.

The Quo Vadis? inquiry suggested a key to the problem. Out of 'the

powerful ferment of ideas', one emerged which had particular appeal: to find out what the priorities for children were in different countries by carrying out a special survey. Ten years had elapsed since Unicef was directed by the General Assembly to focus its attention on the children of the developing world. Since that time policies had evolved on a pragmatic basis, sometimes with more regard to what the major donors and the leading technical experts of the day thought the priorities for children ought to be than to the priorities defined by those on the spot. This could on occasion produce quite bitter stand-offs between those immersed in the day-to-day realities—field staff who took their cue from local officials and ordinary people out in the villages—and those in the policy-making strata in Unicef and the specialized agencies who ultimately called the tune.

As general guidelines, the policies might be sound. But they might also be inhibiting Unicef from addressing critical issues which fell, deliberately or otherwise, outside their scope. There was a fine line between making sure that government officials and field staff knew how to design a project so that it would qualify for Unicef's co-operation and dictating to those government officials what was or was not a suitable project for them to set up. A survey on children's needs throughout the developing world, carried out in co-operation with the countries themselves and with the specialized agencies, would provide a proper basis for review. It would also help to re-weight the process of designing projects away from Unicef's centre.

There were some doubts when the proposal for such a survey was first put to the Executive Board in March 1960. Those who resisted felt that such an undertaking would be expensive, and that its findings were bound to raise expectations among governments for amounts of aid which Unicef would not be able to satisfy. Pate reassured the delegates that the survey would not be exhaustive, and that it would be carried out within Unicef's existing capacity. Among those delegates who warmly endorsed the idea were the Swedes; they had for some time been suggesting that Unicef's method of co-operation was much too piecemeal. Here was the coherent rethink for which they had been pressing.

The Survey on the Needs of Children was organized by Georges Sicault, and it took a year to complete. It was the turning point in a complete revision of Unicef's outlook on how to help the world's children. It was accompanied by state-of-the-art reports from the specialized agencies: the health needs of children (WHO), the nutritional needs of children (FAO and WHO), the educational needs of children (UNESCO), the social welfare needs of children (Bureau of Social Affairs), the labour needs of children (ILO); and by reports from twenty-four different countries (two of which were carried out with the assistance of the International Children's Centre), and two from other international children's organizations: the Inter-American Children's Institute in Montevideo, and the International Union for Child Welfare.

The Unicef report set out to prove the case for considering the needs of children within national development plans. Although its primary purpose was to analyze children's needs and make recommendations for practicable action, its intellectual scope was far broader. Children should not be the orphans of the development process; they should be a target of all policies and programmes directed at building up a country's human capital. The report interwove all the relevant social and economic strands concerning children's well-being in a way which had never been done before. A theory of development was presented in which the satisfaction of children's needs during the various phases of childhood and pre-adulthood mattered deeply. 'Children first' had gained currency during the past fifty years as a motto for times of war and sudden catastrophe. Now Unicef was articulating a new version of the same motto in the context of national development.

The report was presented to the Executive Board by Maurice Pate in June 1961, six months after the declaration of the Decade of Development. More resources from both multilateral and bilateral sources were becoming available for capital investment in developing countries. Unicef's task for the Decade therefore would be to try to ensure that a reasonable share of these resources were used to improve the well-being of children in an integrated and effective form.

Any new project should be planned and phased as a part of a broader multisectoral programme, itself part of a national plan for meeting children's needs. This thesis had implications for Unicef's own operational character: if governments were expected to look at the needs of their children in this light, Unicef would have to do the same. Many countries attached a high priority to certain activities—schooling, for example—which did not currently fall within approved categories of co-operation. It would hardly be consistent for Unicef to argue for pinpointing children's needs within a comprehensive plan and itself be willing to respond only in certain pre-determined areas. Therefore, as part of the new approach, the Executive Board was asked to agree to support virtually any kind of strategic intervention on children's behalf as long as it met a priority need. Unicef should also be willing to assist governments in establishing such needs, and be ready to support any part of the plan that emerged within which its advice, supplies or training stipends would usefully fit.

The new approach was greeted with favour. Many of the more influential Board members had been sounded out in advance, and the time was ripe for its acceptance. Those who had previously expressed reservations about moving into education—the US, the UK, Australia—now gave their approval for change. Although the thesis was advanced against a broad backcloth, the institutional changes proposed were actually quite modest.

Much of the existing checklist of questions against which project proposals were judged would remain extant; but a wider range of proposals would be considered, and commitments could be made to several inter-

related projects at once, over a period spanning not just one year but several. There would be less stringent demands on governments to commit capital resources to projects several times the value of Unicef's own inputs; this matching principle had been devised for the circumstances of postwar Europe as a benchmark of a recipient government's long-term commitment to a programme, but was inhibiting programme development in the developing countries. There would be more flexibility about paying local costs, particularly where these were incurred in association with training.

Unicef would not only help finance surveys on children's needs, but would also be willing to offset some of the costs of thorough project preparation. Where there was a shortage of a particular expertise needed for planning or carrying out a programme, in the future Unicef could sponsor the services of technically qualified staff assigned to the government department in question. This was a step away from exclusive dependency on the experts of the specialized agencies. All in all, these changes reflected Unicef's quest for greater autonomy, its growing self-confidence as an organ of international co-operation, and its desire to make its funds go to work quickly at the pressure points in the development of better children's services.

The June 1961 Executive Board session was a turning point. Although the disease campaigns and the milk conservation programmes were still in operation and would remain so, the peak of their importance was psychologically past. From now on the emphasis would be on things which were less spectacular, more lasting and conceived in tandem with one another. Most of Unicef's staff, field representatives especially, were delighted. Maurice Pate and his senior colleagues, by taking their time, by treading cautiously and in harmony with their most important government backers, had negotiated the organization into the Development Decade. During the 1950s, it had discarded its original character as a carefully proscribed operation for child relief; now it was beginning a second metamorphosis from a humanitarian and welfare organization to an international mechanism for development co-operation.

When the organizations of the UN system began to address the problems of world poverty and underdevelopment in the early 1950s, one of the words that joined their vocabulary was 'infrastructure'. By infrastructure, they meant the architecture of society. Underdevelopment was a condition characterized by the absence of a recognizable social architecture.

The limits of any scheme promoting development are defined by the availability of social institutions into which a seed can be implanted and expected to bear fruit. Disaster creates its own institutions: the refugee camp, the temporary shelter, places where victims of war or famine flock to receive relief aid—institutions which are almost by their nature anti-

thetic to self-help, operating in an artificial crisis-induced environment. Development, on the other hand, has both to create the kind of institutions which are organic to daily life, and cannot take place unless they are there. In the poorest society, the infrastructure—schools, roads, police stations, hospitals, factories, courts, town halls, social welfare agencies—is weak or non-existent and touches the lives of the fewest people. Any organization trying to help a society 'develop', can only bring its aid to bear on the poorest at the rate at which the society itself reaches out to them. In underdeveloped countries, this process can take a generation or more. And parts of it may not be at the top of a country's priorities, or simply cannot be undertaken before a great many other things have been 'developed' first.

The tension between obvious need in the form of acute poverty, high infant mortality rates, illiteracy, hunger and malnutrition and the lack of an institutional framework through which to meet those needs constitute what could be called the development trap.

In the post-colonial era, as this tension became more acutely felt, the need to build up a social and economic infrastructure became the theme of the development fraternity. Its absence, especially in large parts of Africa, was a source of great frustration to those trying to reach the poor. Without roads, transport, marketing arrangements, communications and administration, there was no way into a society, physically or metaphorically.

The development trap prompted a variety of reactions from those trying to find a way to release the spring. Some leaders of newly-independent countries were too impatient to wait for the infrastructure to grow, solidly, organically, at whatever painfully slow generational pace a country's treasury and international credit-rating would allow. They wanted development now, and so did their people, to whom they had made a political promise to deliver it. Artificial infrastructures were slapped down upon societies, politically enforced in the hope that short-term turmoil would quickly abate under the persuasive influence of their rewards.

Among the international funding organizations, there were many apostles of development who tried to compensate for the lack of an infrastructure by putting in their own organizational network to bypass or overtake halting and often inefficient official institutional growth. Here, the theory was that the self-evident benefits that ensued would twist the arm of government to take them over at a later date. Often these hopes were built on sand. How to force the pace of infrastructural expansion, with few resources and without creating something alien and resented by those who were meant to benefit, was a problem whose outlines gradually sharpened as the Development Decade progressed. At the beginning of the Decade, faith rested in the trinity of capital transfers, technical transfers and economic growth. The benefits of increased prosperity would, in time, trickle down to the poor through infrastructures they erected on the way.

So at least the theory ran.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the word infrastructure was mostly used to denote the physical features conventionally regarded as key ingredients of a modern economy: hydroelectric dams, industrial plant, cement factories, arterial highways, ports, railroads, cash-crop plantations, sewage and water works, universities and hospitals. This was the kind of infrastructural development which chiefly pre-occupied both the developing countries themselves, and most of the institutions developed by the UN and its member countries for the purpose of transferring resources from the rich world to the poor.

Humanitarian organizations such as Unicef whose sole focus was the poor and the vulnerable took up the issue of infrastructure from a different direction. Their concern was the social architecture at the level where the poor lived their lives: in the community, sometimes urban but usually rural, where even to apply the word 'community' tended to imply a far more sophisticated pattern of settlement and social organization than usually existed. Without some infrastructural network—schools, health centres, co-operative societies, women's clubs—there was nothing for the agents of progress to invest in, build onto, staff or equip.

During the 1960s, beginning with the Survey on the Needs of Children, Unicef tried in numerous ways to adapt its own culture and institutional style so as to help strengthen the range of social organizations at the community level which would enable children, especially pre-school children, to receive better care. Unicef itself, as an external funding organization, could never be a direct instrument for such a purpose; but it could fine-tune itself so as to be as responsive as possible to efforts designed by government departments and carried out by local officials towards that end.

The expansion in support of training schemes over the previous few years was one area in which Unicef had tried to help build up health and nutritional infrastructures; the growing enthusiasm for community development was another example of infrastructural emphasis. The changes in Unicef policy which first began to come about as a result of the 1960–61 Survey on the Basic Needs of Children, although they appeared superficially to be of a 'housekeeping' variety, were attempts to find a broader spectrum of ways to use Unicef's assistance to plug infrastructural nooks and crannies.

This was the underlying motivation behind the evolution towards the 'country approach': the design of a programme in which all the ways in which Unicef would co-operate in developing children's services—MCH, disease control, nutrition, social welfare, community development, education and training—were conceived as part of a whole, and negotiated as a package with the government in question. The same motivation was reflected in Unicef's enthusiasm for surveys on children's needs and, in

circumstances where a country was short of necessary expertise, some of the costs of project preparation. It only took one short extra step to arrive at the concept which in 1962 emerged at the leading intellectual edge of Unicef's contribution to the Development Decade: planning to meet the needs of children.

In the era when development thinking was dominated by the economists and economic growth regarded as the precondition of all other manifestations of development—from the lowering of the infant mortality rate to the construction of schools and health centres—planning was the cardinal development discipline. Planning as the way to apply scarce national and international resources to problems of underdevelopment was being increasingly adopted by the developing countries, and was beginning to be demanded by external donors and creditors as a precondition for official aid. India was one of the first developing countries to adopt a succession of five-year plans. Many others followed suit. National plans laid down targets for economic and social development and defined the parameters for the allocation of national budgetary resources. If the plan was the arbiter, it was logical from Unicef's point of view that the masters of the plan were the point of leverage for influencing programme expenditures on children.

More important still was that, in the absence of co-ordinated national planning, policies thought to have nothing to do with children were actually having a profound, and sometimes negative, impact on their well-being. A country's ministry of agriculture might be busily engaged in bringing as much land under cash crop cultivation to raise export income, for example, while the ministry of health was preoccupied with providing clinical services to treat the consequences of hunger and malnutrition. If the planners looked at both policies in tandem, they might be able to ensure that the policy of raising export income was not over-emphasized at the price of the country's food production and the children's nutritional condition.

In June 1962, Unicef's Executive Board approved a declaration of policy for children in relation to the Development Decade which asserted the need to take children's and young people's interests into account when designing national development plans. The essence of this declaration was endorsed by special resolution of the UN General Assembly later in the year.

In October 1962, Edward Iwaszkiewicz, a Polish economist who had served with distinction in his country's Planning Commission, joined Unicef with a particular brief to incorporate the planning dimension into Unicef's work worldwide. Under the guidance of Iwaszkiewicz and a small staff of planners, momentum gathered behind the concept of 'Planning for Children'. Their main task was to convince governments that it was important to consider the needs of the 'whole' child within a comprehensive framework. To do this required that the idea be endorsed at an international level. Economists with national and international standing had to be persuaded

that there were reasons far more cogent than sentiment or humanitarian concern for taking children's needs into account in the national scheme of things.

Iwaskiewicz was a skilful diplomat who knew how to promote the new thesis in the UN's regional economic commissions and among professionals and academics in research institutes in different parts of the world. Under his influence, together with that of Heyward and Sicault, Unicef began to spell out its new vision in a variety of fora.

An infusion of economic vocabulary entered Unicef's statements and publications, elaborating the notion of programmes for children as the creation of 'human capital': 'the key to self-sustaining growth is improvement in the quality of the oncoming generations'; 'economic development will be conditioned by the quality of the flow of young persons into the growth sectors of developing countries in the course of the next few decades'; 'of particular importance is the number of leaders they will produce for the extension of the development process'. Some of this language, so far removed from the inspiration for helping mothers and children in distress which many believed was the proper inspiration for a Unicef made some of Unicef's staff and Executive Board members a little uncomfortable. Not everyone was convinced that economic planning was the salvation of mankind.

The high point of articulation of the new thesis was reached at a round-table conference convened under Unicef's auspices at the Rockefeller Foundation Centre in Bellagio, Italy. Held in April 1964, the conference was called 'Children and Youth in National Development', and it was designed to put both Unicef and its vision on the planning map worldwide. It brought together a number of leading development economists and planning specialists—including Professors Jan Tinbergen, Alfred Sauvy and Hans Singer—and a high level of representation from developing countries: an indication of respect for the new axis of partnership in the post-colonial world.

The chairman of the conference was Professor V. K. R. V. Rao, a member of the Indian Planning Commission; also taking part were Tunisia's Secretary of State for Planning and Finance and Tanganyika's Minister for Development Planning. The planning expertise of the socialist countries was recognized by the presence of representatives from USSR, Poland and Yugoslavia. The dean of the Unicef Executive Board delegates, Professor Robert Debré of France, played a leading part. Two of the UN economic commissions sent high level observers, as did FAO, WHO, ILO and the Bureau of Social Affairs. From Unicef, Maurice Pate, Dick Heyward, Georges Sicault and Edward Iwaszkiewicz were the key participants, together with Professor Herman Stein of the Columbia University School of Social Work, an associate of Unicef's who acted as conference rapporteur.

For many of those connected with Unicef over the years, either on its staff or on its Executive Board, this round-table conference was the most important meeting in its seventeen-year history. Even those who were not entirely convinced by the swing of the pendulum which had led Unicef into planning and were still unsure about where it would lead appreciated the landmark the Bellagio Conference represented for an organization which had originally set out on the modest task of feeding children in postwar Europe.

It was a point of pride that Unicef could now sit down with senior government ministers and other luminaries and present its own development approach. In effect, Unicef was announcing in a nonconfrontational manner that it no longer wished to be regarded as very much the junior partner of the specialized agencies and other international development collaborators, and was presenting its credentials for joining the development club as a fully-fledged member.

In the succeeding years, the practice of seeking specialized agency approval for the technical aspects of projects supported by Unicef fell away, as did other arrangements for co-operation no longer suited to the changing relationships between Unicef and its fellow members of the UN family. The formal recognition by the system that Unicef was primarily a development rather than a humanitarian organization came eventually in 1972 when, for the first time, its annual report was considered in the Second Committee of the Economic and Social Council, on Economic and Financial Questions, rather than the Third, on Humanitarian and Social Affairs.

By the mid-1960s, the indivisibility of social and economic aspects of the problems of poverty and underdevelopment was becoming much more widely recognized. Unicef's new approach fitted this evolution of contemporary ideas. At the outset of the Development Decade, the conventional viewpoint saw planning principally as a tool for economic rather than social development. Where planning was a useful method for manipulating 'human capital', this was mainly because human resources were a necessary adjunct to productive capital investment. The educational, health and other social services which developed human capital and kept it in trim were obviously necessary from an economic point of view, and themselves required human resources and planners to deploy them. Gradually, however, this mechanistic view gave way to a better appreciation that human resources were not so easily manipulable to economic ends unless the framework within which they were to become so was convivial, and answered to their needs as human beings, family and community members. In this scenario, Unicef's suggestion that planning had as much to do with children as it did with irrigation works and public highways began to make more sense.

During childhood, Unicef pointed out, the adult was formed—physically,

intellectually, and emotionally. Hitherto, any attention given specifically to children within the allocation of national budgetary resources had confined itself to the underprivileged and the handicapped, a kind of subspecies whose special problems the State addressed in default of their parents' and communities' capacities to do so. But all children had special problems, as recent generations of scientific inquiry had made clear. A national policy concerning children should therefore embrace the interests of all children, not just a few exceptional cases. And it should do so across all the appropriate sectoral lines—in health, education, agriculture, public works, labour and of course planning itself—not just within 'social affairs', always a poor relation when it came to command over resources. No-one was suggesting that children should become a sector of their own: children are an age group, not a discipline. But within the various sectors, their needs ought to be recognized not merely on humanitarian grounds, but on the grounds of society's own health and well-being, now and in the future.

The Bellagio round table was followed by similar conferences, held at levels progressively closer to programme planning design and implementation. In 1965 and 1966, conferences with similar agendas to the Bellagio meeting, were held in Santiago, for the Latin American region, and in Bangkok, for the Asian region. Both these conferences were jointly hosted with regional planning institutes and the respective UN Economic Commissions. In 1966, two less elaborate regional meetings were held to consider programmes for children and youth within national development in Africa—one in Paris for the French-speaking countries and one in Addis Ababa under the auspices of the Unicef Executive Board.

In 1967, Peru became the first country to organize a national conference along similar lines; other countries in Latin America and Asia, as well as the Arab States, began to follow suit. By 1969, it was becoming almost standard practice in certain Asian countries to undertake a systematic review of programmes for children and youth while discussing their next five-year plan. Iwaszkiewicz and his planning staff continued to reinforce their links with regional planning institutes, reimbursing faculties in Dakar and Bangkok for lecturers on social planning. At universities in both the industrialized and the developing world where development studies were being incorporated into the academic curriculae Unicef tried to identify allies who could help to gain intellectual respectability for the topic of children and youth in national development.

The last of the major Unicef-sponsored conferences on a similar theme was held in Lomé, Togo, in May 1972. The conference, in which ministers from eight francophone West African countries took part, was the final chapter in a three-year regional exercise to strengthen the countries' own capacities for planning for the needs of children. Unicef's Regional Director in Abidjan, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, previously Director of Senegal's Planning Commission, used his prestige to enlist the political backing of

the heads of state in each country for this exercise. National studies on children, youth, women and economic development, inspired and partially financed by Unicef, were examined in an effort to define regional priorities for improving the lives of women and children.

In 1969, the year in which the Lomé studies were commissioned, Unicef reached the peak of its involvement in planning as a separate discipline. Iwaszkiewicz himself retired, and the small group of planners began to break up, absorbed into Unicef's regular programme staff.

At one level, they had worked themselves out of a job. The 'country approach' had been formally established as the required method of designing programmes in which Unicef's co-operation would play a part; and the idea of considering the needs of children and youth within national development plans had reached a degree of acceptability which meant that it was no longer necessary to have a special planning staff to make it happen. At another level, the elaboration of children's needs within national plans had not guaranteed that greater amounts of budgetary resources were put to meeting them. Planning was an important corrective of the haphazard methods of project formulation which had preceded its ascendancy; but it was by no means the master key for unlocking the development trap. Gradually, as the Development Decade drew to a close, that key was beginning to seem increasingly elusive.

The push for planning had served many purposes. The most important contribution it had made was to open up the debate about children and society, bringing within its range questions concerning children's rights, women's status, the break-down of traditional family structures, the forces that shape the 'good person' and encourage democratic values, as well as to give new emphasis to more conventional social issues of child health, nutrition and welfare. But in the end, it was extremely difficult to fuse all these elements together and describe a systematic planning method to deal with them.

With their endless ramifications and their overlaps into almost every branch of social and economic science, they escaped elaboration into a distinct set of principles. Perhaps the consciousness-raising effect was enough. Children as agents, and as symbols, of growth and change and a healthy society had gained a new legitimacy; so, in the eyes of many governmental and organizational collaborators, had Unicef itself.

The idea of meeting the priority needs of children as a target of national development plans had been a useful intellectual shock tactic. But in the fullness of its potential it was, and is, more of a dream than a reality.

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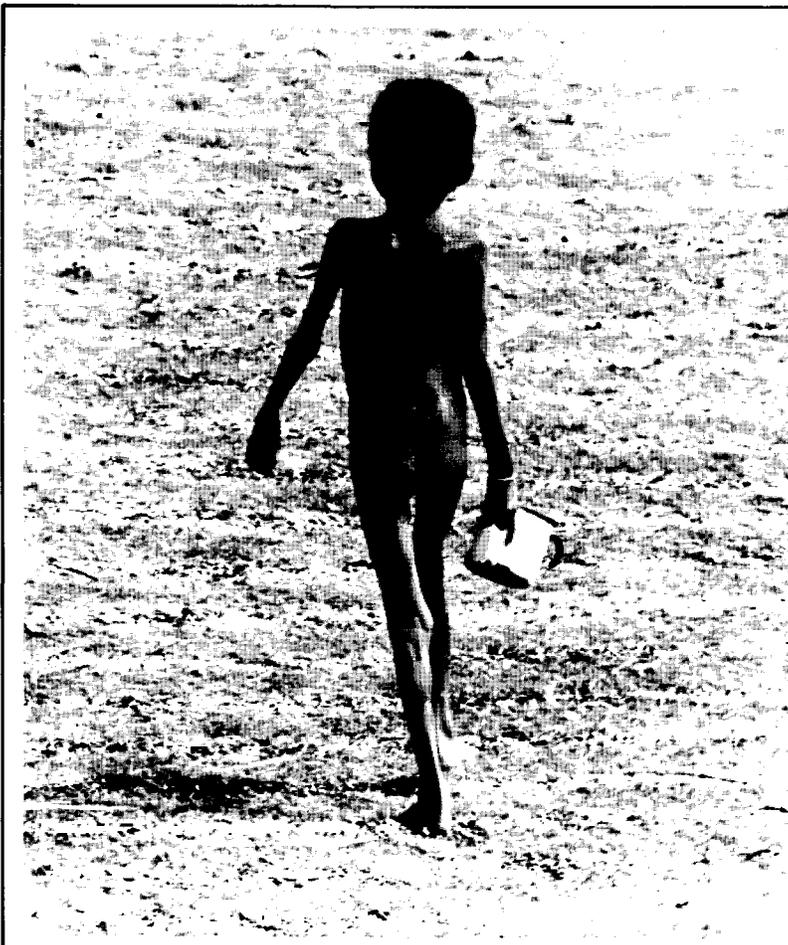
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Settler children of the Mahaweli Development Project in Sri Lanka undertake some of their studies outdoors. (Unicef/Holbrooke)

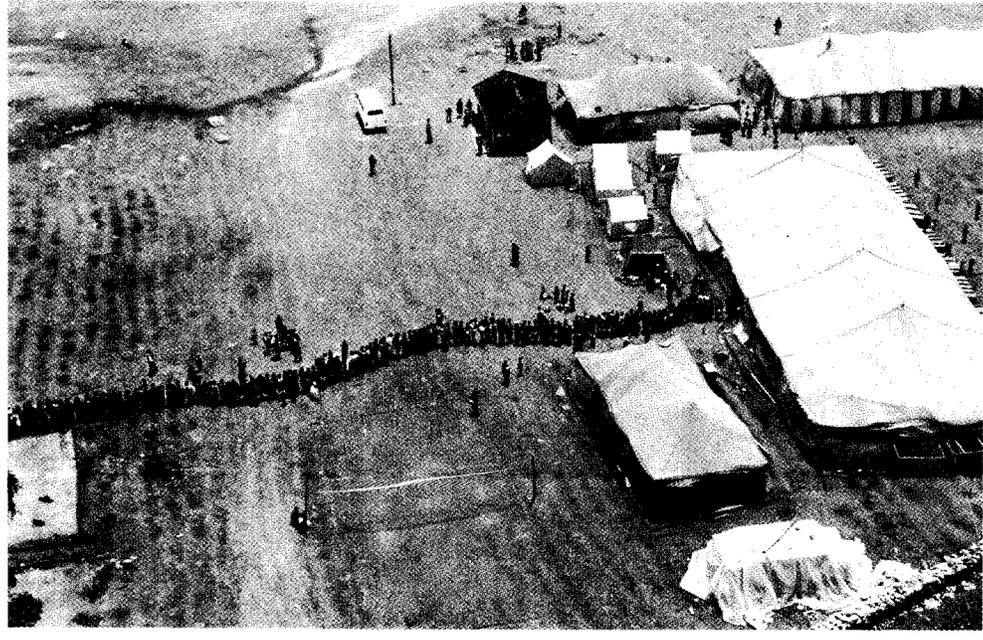


Children wander aimlessly among rubble in Wahdate Camp, one of the many refugee camps in Amman, in Jordan, 1970. (Unicef/Gerin)



A boy and his ration cup. This malnourished child in drought-stricken India in 1974 is receiving a ration of milk at a special feeding programme. (Unicef/Satyan)

Food lines in Chimaltenango, Guatemala. On 4 February 1976, a massive earthquake killed 25,000 people and made a million homeless, including a half a million children. (Unicef/Ling)





A simple, dependable and maintainable water hand pump known as the India Mark II has been developed. These pumps have brought water supplies to thousands of previously-deprived communities.
(Unicef/Holbrooke)



Collecting water consumes much of the time of rural women in the developing world. In Kenya, Kikuyu girls climb a steep hill to bring back their day's supply.
(Unicef/Matheson)



A village co-operative sewing class in Ecuador. Children's well-being is affected not only by their mother's health and welfare, but by their ability to earn money too. (Unicef/Wolff)



A family planning lesson in the hills of Nepal. (Unicef/Sassoon)