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HIST/15/Add.2

TO: Headquarters Staff

28 February 1984

FROM: ^{J.C.} Jack Charnow

JC/141/84

SUBJECT: Coming aboard on the History Project

Although the attached memo and Status Report on the History Project is addressed to the field, it is equally applicable to headquarters staff. As you can see, we would very much welcome inputs from all staff. In addition to the direct substantive contributions to the Project of some of you, others may well have some materials, anecdotes, or ideas which will contribute to the Project.

Don't hesitate to reach out.

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HIST/15/Add.1

TO: Heads of all UNICEF offices in the field
FROM: J.C.
Jack Charnow, History Project
SUBJECT: UNICEF History Project: What is it all about and where is it at?

27 February 1984
JC/140/84

The subtitle to this memo encapsulates the queries about the History Project which have come through to us from many UNICEF colleagues.

The enclosed Status Report (E/ICEF/1984/CRP. 26) prepared for the upcoming Board session should help meet this understandable curiosity. We hope you will circulate this to your staff.

As you will note, the Project will result in a series of publications. However it also has as a major objective the preparation of a record of UNICEF experience for internal use. The "living institutional memory" of long-time staff members no longer suffices at UNICEF's present stage of development. Moreover, many of the repositories of that experience have retired, or will do so before long. Some 40 percent of UNICEF professional staff (excluding project personnel) have been recruited to the organization within the last five years.

While the Field Manuals will set forth current policy and desirable practice, what the History Project seeks to do is to enrich the perspective of UNICEF staff by providing an understanding of what the organization went through to arrive at that point, and what has been learned in the process.

Moreover this record should help overcome a problem which has often arisen when a key person with specialized experience is transferred or leaves the organization: i.e., a panoply of readily accessible materials on experience is not readily available to his/her successor. Related to this, the Project will set in train a base upon which a running "record" of UNICEF experience can continuously be built after the Project has ended.

We thus hope that you and your staff will regard the Project as really an organization-wide enterprise, and that you will want to do what you can to increase its permanent usefulness. One way is to respond to our past and future requests for participation. Another is to let us have your ideas, suggestions, and comments.

We will keep you informed of our progress from time to time.

Enclosure:

Status Report (E/ICEF/1984/CRP.26)

HIST/15

E/ICEF/1984/CRP.26
22 February 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
Executive Board
1984 session

UNICEF HISTORY PROJECT

Status report by the Executive Director

Summary

This document reports on the progress of the UNICEF history project and discusses its work plan and financing.

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General approach

1. Work to date on the history project has confirmed the general validity of the approach detailed in the paper presented to the May 1983 Executive Board session (E/ICEF/1983/CRP.43). A basic objective of the history project is the preparation of "the record" of UNICEF experience. This includes, in addition to voluminous written materials, the reflections of key persons having long-time involvement in the work of UNICEF, such as Board delegates, staff members and National Committee leaders. It will be used as a basis for:

- (a) a permanent collective "institutional memory" of UNICEF, valuable for those engaged in ongoing work for UNICEF or for children generally; and
- (b) publishing and/or encouraging the publication of various aspects of UNICEF experience for specialized audiences and the general public.

Preparation of "the record"

2. In the preparation of "the record", taped interviews and/or written materials have been collected from:

- (a) Some 40 retired staff members, with more material to come from about 30 other retired and present staff members with long-time and varied UNICEF experience;

- (b) Some 10 former Board chairmen and other long-time delegates (about 10 more are planned);

- (c) Country office histories in some 40 countries (about half of the total expected); country offices have also been asked to interview retired senior government officials who have had close involvement with UNICEF; and

- (d) Several former senior officials of United Nations agencies closely involved in work with UNICEF (some others still to be elicited).

3. Reminiscences, reflections and comments are being sought for the memoirs, rather than information already available in writing. Participants are asked to provide specific examples, wherever possible, based upon their own experiences.

4. National Committees have been asked to consider: (a) preparing their own histories; and (b) initiating the preparation of a larger history of national involvement with UNICEF. Several Committees have either started on a history or intend to do so. The Geneva Office is to prepare a draft history of the work of the Reunion, its standing groups and various sub-committees.

5. The history project is developing an indexing scheme for its various source materials. Operated through electronic data processing and retrieval technology, it will form a significant part of an ultimate integrated data base for the organization as a whole.

Synthesis and analysis of "the record"

6. Synthesis and analysis of "the record", prerequisites for both internal use and for publications, are proceeding.
7. This involves identifying the major influences, issues and trends which helped shape UNICEF policies and strategies, as well as their development from the planning stage to programme implementation. The evolution of UNICEF's work is viewed from a number of perspectives: geographic; programme fields; financial; administration; external relations; etc.
8. The various topics included in these broad subject headings will be examined in close co-operation with the secretariat units concerned. Their participation in this process should provide them with added perspectives for their ongoing work.

Publications

9. The publications phase of the project (see also paras. 10-11 below) will consist of:

(a) publishing and/or encouraging the publication of aspects of UNICEF experience in order to reach the general public, and special groups and "target" audiences (e.g. decision-makers, development economists, parliamentarians, various professions, women's and other non-governmental organizations, teachers and schoolchildren, persons engaged in services benefiting children, etc.). A series of UNICEF historical booklets or thematic monographs is envisaged. Among the other media channels to be used would be journals, newspaper (syndicated where possible), television and radio, and

(b) the publication of a UNICEF history (or histories) in book form through commercial channels.

Time-frame for the project

10. The main emphases in the project during 1984 and a considerable portion of 1985 will be on the first two main elements of the project - preparation of "the record" and preparation of syntheses, analyses and summaries. For some subjects the publications phase for thematic booklets and articles would be reached, or would be well under way, during this period.
11. Most publication activity, however, is planned for 1986, the year of UNICEF's fortieth anniversary. This would include an overall history of UNICEF. Another book, based in part on the materials available in the history project, is contemplated on childhood as a social and humanitarian issue - the historical development of concepts of children and societies' commitment to their well-being. Both books would be published commercially to reach a wide international readership.
12. Staffing for the project would be reduced in 1985. The project would come to an end in the course of 1986.

13. The project has begun a process to ensure a continuing "record" of UNICEF experience. This current history process would need to be integrated into the appropriate functions of UNICEF secretariat in 1986 to yield readily accessible information useful for the ongoing work of UNICEF - policy formulation, planning, management, staff orientation and external relations. There should be no need in the future, whether it be the fiftieth anniversary of UNICEF or any other occasion, for another history project.

Financing and budget estimates

14. The report of the 1983 Board session (E/ICEF/701, para. 144) states the following:

"The Board noted that the costs to date of the project, to be completed by 1986, were covered by "savings" in the revised 1983 budget; funding for the project for 1984-1985 was open to special contributions. If those proved insufficient, the remainder would be covered from any savings in the 1984-1985 budget or by inclusion in a supplementary budget request."

15. In July 1983, the Swiss National Committee announced a contribution of \$100,000 for the costs of the project, which was remitted to UNICEF on 31 August. In acknowledging the contribution with gratitude, in a letter dated 14 July, Mr. Grant stated that the \$100,000 would be applied toward the costs of the project's activities in 1984. He hoped that the Committee's generous contribution would be a stimulus for other contributions to the project.

16. The Mutual Assistance Fund of the Reunion of National Committees has decided to contribute \$40,000 to the history project for the publication of a history. This contribution may not be available until 1986, although a portion may be turned over in 1985.

17. In the Executive Director's information note on the history project to the May 1983 Board session he estimated that \$265,000 would be required for 1984, (the same as the amount covered by savings in 1983) and that half that amount would be required for 1985 (E/ICEF/1983/CRP.43, para. 20). The project costs for 1984 and 1985 will remain within these estimates. This takes into account the co-opting of facilities and services to the project by a number of secretariat units which would directly benefit from aspects of the project.

18. Estimates for 1986 project costs will be included in the UNICEF budget estimates submitted to the 1985 Board session.



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