



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC  
AND  
SOCIAL COUNCIL



DISTR.  
LIMITED

E/ICEF/L.1006  
20 March 1957

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

Programme Committee

Recommendation of the Executive Director for an Allocation  
BRITISH HONDURAS  
Maternal and Child Welfare Services and Training<sup>1/</sup>

1. The Administration recommends an allocation of \$16,500 to British Honduras for the development and expansion of its maternal and child health services and a related training programme. This allocation would cover the cost of a programme to be undertaken by the Government for a two-year period from 1 July 1957 to the end of June 1959. UNICEF would provide teaching aids, equipment for a central training centre, two district hospitals and six health centres, and stipends for trainees. Of the total expenditure proposed by the Government in support of this programme US\$50,000 is considered as matching for this proposed allocation.

2. The high infant mortality rate and the high maternal mortality and hospital cases following delivery indicates the need for broader and more specialized attention to mothers and children. Vital statistics as reported by the Government for the years 1952-1955 are given in Annex I to this paper.

Plan of operations

3. The Government of British Honduras has set up a five-year plan for economic development (1955-1960). Within this plan the Government intends to re-organize and to improve the public health structure. An outline of the public health organization and health services in each district is given in Annex II to this paper.

1/ First request for UNICEF aid to this programme.

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4. The country is divided into six districts in each of which health matters are administered by a medical services department. At the present time there are nine hospitals, one for each of the six districts and three specialized hospitals (tuberculosis, psychiatric and geriatric) located in the capital Belize. The country is to have a total of twenty health centres of which fourteen are now in service and six are proposed to be built or renovated.

5. UNICEF's assistance would be limited to certain parts of the overall development of the Government's programmes. The Fund would provide the following:

- a) equipment to assist in training of auxiliary personnel to be assigned to the centres to be built and to the MCW centres already functioning but insufficiently staffed;
- b) equipment for the two district hospitals and two health centres of Corozal and Stann Creek, which are to be rebuilt or renovated;
- c) equipment for four rural centres in Crique Sarco, Sittee River, Seine Bight, and Benque Viejo which are to be established in new buildings;
- d) transport for supervision and clinic visits in the districts of Corozal and Stann Creek;
- e) stipends for twenty-eight midwife trainees (see paragraph 14 below).

#### Health centres

6. Six health centres are planned for completion in 1957 as follows:

- a) two health centres adjoining the district hospitals in Corozal and Stann Creek;
- b) four rural health centres (sub-centres) in Crique Sarco (health district of Toledo), Sittee River and Seine Bight (health district of Stann Creek), Benque Viejo (health district of Cayo).

The health centres adjoining the district hospitals are staffed with public health nurse-midwives and one sanitary inspector and have the part-time

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services of a dentist. Clinics are held several times a week by the district medical officer in these centres. The rural health centres (sub-centres) are to be staffed by a rural health nurse-midwife working full time and be visited regularly by both the district and medical services department personnel. The rural health centres will provide curative services and attend deliveries. They will hold pre-natal clinics in the centre, distribute milk and carry out periodical visits to the schools. A programme of school health services, described briefly in Annex II to this paper is a further adjunct to the overall programmes of preventive medicine.

#### Hospitals

7. A new district hospital, with twenty-eight beds of which ten will be for maternity and paediatric services, is being constructed in Corozal to replace the one destroyed by a hurricane in September 1955. The hospital at Stann Creek is being reconstructed and expanded to accommodate forty-four beds of which twenty will be for maternity and paediatric services. Both hospitals are to be completed by June 1957. Near each hospital is a public health centre. The district medical officer (a doctor) is in charge of the hospital and the health centre. The Belize Hospital has recently completed a maternity block for twenty beds which will be utilized for the training of midwives.

#### School of nursing and midwifery

8. A new school of nursing and midwifery is proposed for construction adjoining the Belize Hospital and is to be completed in June 1958. The site has been purchased and funds for construction have been earmarked by the Baron Bliss Fund. In addition to providing a training area the building will also be utilized as a student residence for the nurses.

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Training

9. In order to further the training of nurses and midwives, the World Health Organization, the Colonial Development and Welfare Organization (CD&W) and the International Co-operation Administration (ICA) are providing fellowships for training abroad of staff who will on their return assist in the training programme of the School of Nursing and Midwifery and in staffing the expanding health services. With additional personnel available, the Government plans in future to place the nursing services of each district under the direct supervision and control of the district health nurse responsible to the senior public health nurse of the Medical Services Department.

10. WHO fellowships: Fellowships are to be provided by WHO for the following:

- a) a nurse instructor to go to Toronto University early in 1957 for training as an instructor in paediatrics and obstetrical nursing. (She will be assigned to the School of Nursing and Midwifery.);
- b) a nurse instructor to study Medical and Surgical Nursing in 1958 for a subsequent assignment in the School of Nursing and Midwifery;
- c) the director of the School of Nursing and Hospital Nursing Services (the present Hospital Matron) to receive a four-month fellowship in 1957 on organization of schools of nursing and clinical practice areas for students;
- d) a public health nurse at present receiving training in public health at the University of Michigan. (She will return to British Honduras in September 1957 and occupy the post of Senior Public Health Nurse.);
- e) a public health inspector left for Jamaica in February 1956 for a year's study in health education.

11. Training provided by CD&W: Fellowships as being provided by the Colonial Development and Welfare Organization for the following:

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- a) a nurse-midwife instructor is scheduled to go to London in June 1957 for a six-month period and will upon her return be assigned as an instructor in midwifery in the School of Nursing and Midwifery;
- b) a staff nurse goes to London in September 1957 for a nine-month period to study ward administration and will assist with preparation of student clinical practice areas in the Belize Hospital upon return;
- c) two staff nurses are at present studying public health in Jamaica (September 1956-September 1957) and will then occupy posts in the districts;
- d) a public health nurse left September 1956 for Jamaica to study public health nursing administration and will return in September 1957;
- e) a sanitary inspector is scheduled to receive further training in Jamaica during the period of September 1957 to August 1958;
- f) a pharmacist leaves for London June 1957 for a four to five years course;
- g) a pharmacist will leave for London June 1957 for a six-month refresher course;
- h) a laboratory technician left for a four-year study period in London beginning October 1956;
- i) an assistant laboratory technician is scheduled to leave for Jamaica in August 1957 for a six-month study period.

12. Training provided by ICA: The United States International Co-operation Administration provided funds for a dietician to study in Puerto Rico for one year beginning September 1956. Upon her return she will work with the students in a diet laboratory in the School of Nursing.

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13. Training courses in British Honduras: The Government proposes to carry out four training courses in 1957 and to repeat these in 1958. Assistance requested from UNICEF (paragraph 15 below) is for use in implementing these courses:

- a) Two untrained midwives are to receive one year of training in 1957 (and another two will be trained in 1958) at the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The trainees will be recruited by the Senior Public Health Nurse at Belize. Upon graduation they will be assigned as licensed midwives and will receive an advanced midwives' kit provided by UNICEF.
- b) Twelve untrained midwives each year (1957 and 1958) will receive a two-months course in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, including observation in the Maternity Ward of the Belize General Hospital. Upon graduation, these midwives will receive an advanced midwife kit provided by UNICEF.
- c) Twenty untrained midwives in 1957, and another twenty in 1958, will receive, during the period of one year, elementary training accompanied by observation in the maternity wing of the district hospitals in the principles of child birth, hygiene and care of the newborn infant. The district public health nurse will set up and supervise the courses in the five districts (not including Belize). Four midwives will be selected in each of the five districts. Upon graduation from the training course each of the midwives will receive a simple UNICEF midwife kit. A total of forty midwives will receive training during the two-year period 1957-58.

The public health nurse and the rural health nurse will work with and supervise the activities of these practical midwives during and after completion of their training. They will be encouraged to bring their clients to the health centre and to participate in the health centre's activities during pre-natal and well baby clinics.

- d) Five rural health nurses, one from each district except Belize, will receive a two-year training course, including one year of midwifery instruction in the School of Nursing and Midwifery and will then be assigned to rural areas on completion of their training. Upon graduation each nurse will be presented with an advanced midwifery kit provided by UNICEF.

14. Stipends will be provided to twenty-eight untrained midwives during their periods of training (as outlined at paragraph 13 a) and b) above). The stipends are calculated at the equivalent of US\$30 a month, and UNICEF is asked to contribute twenty dollars of the monthly amount. UNICEF would thus provide a

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total of approximately \$2,000 toward the cost of these stipends:

- a) for four untrained midwives in training twelve months each at \$20 monthly;
- b) for twenty-four untrained midwives in training two months each at \$20 monthly;

UNICEF commitments

15. UNICEF would provide the following for the two-year training programme:

	<u>US\$</u>
a) <u>Equipment</u> (paragraphs 5 to 8 and 13)	
i) for the Nursing and Midwifery School	2,150
ii) for maternity and paediatric services in two district hospitals	3,000
iii) training equipment for district centres	250
iv) for six health centres and sub- centres	2,200
v) kits for midwives and public health nurses	1,400
vi) transport (2 jeeps, 1 outboard motor and bicycles)	<u>4,200</u>
Total equipment	13,200
b) <u>Freight</u>	1,300
c) <u>Stipends</u> (paragraph 14 above)	<u>2,000</u>
Total recommended allocation	16,500

WHO approval and participation

16. WHO's technical approval of this project is anticipated. The proposal outlined above has been developed in close co-operation with the WHO/PASB Zone Office in Guatemala City. A Public Health Nurse and a Public Health Inspector are at present abroad studying public health under WHO fellowships and will return in 1957. In addition two nurse instructors and the Director of the School of Nursing and Hospital Nursing Services will take up WHO fellowships during 1957 and 1958 for further periods of training in the instruction of nurses and midwives. (See paragraph 10 above.)

Government commitments

17. The Government proposes to spend an estimated EH\$390,000 (equivalent to US\$272,727) for the development of the facilities required for the expansion and strengthening of the maternal and child welfare programme. Funds for the following capital expenditure for buildings have been appropriated as shown below and the buildings are in the process of construction.

	<u>EH\$</u>
a) site for School of Nursing and residence	5,000
b) construction costs for School of Nursing residence for sixty students	120,000
c) reconstruction of hospital, Stann Creek	25,000
d) construction costs of hospital, Corozal	140,000
e) construction cost of two rural health centres, at Stann Creek and Corozal at 25,000 each	50,000
f) construction of four rural health centres at Sittee River, Seine Bight, Creek Sasso and Benque Viejo at EH\$12,500 each	50,000
Total capital expenditure	<u>390,000</u>

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18. In addition the Government has increased its 1957 public health budget for personnel by BH\$114,881 (equivalent to US\$80,336) over the 1956 appropriation. This reflects an increase of approximately twenty-five per cent in expenditure and raises the personnel establishment from 189 to 206 staff members. The increase includes also a raise in the base pay of persons employed in this category. The Government will also provide all costs of materials, supplies and equipment other than those supplied by UNICEF that are necessary for the development of this programme.

19. Of the total cost to the Government for the expanded programme in maternal and child welfare services and training, the equivalent of US\$50,000 is considered as matching for the proposed UNICEF allocation.

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ANNEX I

BRITISH HONDURAS: VITAL STATISTICS 1952 - 1955

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>	<u>1955</u>
Estimated population	73,171	75,782	78,094	80,788
Number of registered births	3,028	2,986	3,231	3,463
Number of deaths, all causes	794	816	876	858
Number of deaths under one year	237	260	302	344
Number of deaths under one month	105	113	121	116
Number of still births	95	105	82	81

Rates:

Birth rate per 1,000 of population	41.38	39.4	41.4	42.8
Crude death rate per 1,000 of population	10.85	10.77	11.22	10.6
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	78.3	87.07	93.47	99.3
Neonatal death rate per 1,000 live births	34.67	37.84	37.45	33.5
Still birth rate per 1,000 live births	32.4	35.2	25.4	23.4

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ANNEX II

BRITISH HONDURAS: - PUBLIC HEALTH ORGANIZATION

1. The public health organization of British Honduras is under the supervision of the Medical Services Department, located in Belize.
2. Each district of the country has a hospital under the direction of a doctor who is also the District Medical Officer and responsible for the development of all the health services in his district including: maternal and child health, school hygiene, dental care, nutritional and feeding centres, control of food handlers, epidemiology of tuberculosis and other communicable diseases, environmental sanitation, malaria eradication, special mass campaigns, community and home visiting, health information and education.
3. The district hospitals are administratively linked with all the health centres in their respective districts and the district medical officer renders part time services to the centres within his district. Guidance to nursing staff and local midwives in the district is provided by personnel stationed in the district capital. In the future the district public health nurse-midwife is to be responsible for directing and co-ordinating the work of nursing personnel and of the qualified and empirical midwives in her district with the aims of improving their services to the communities.
4. The directing personnel of the Medical Services Department (the director, the medical adviser, the public health midwife, the chest physician, the chief sanitary inspector, the nutrition officer and the public health educator) will also aid in the supervision of the personnel and their field work activities and in co-ordination of health activities. These officers will assist the rural health nurses in planning the various aspects of their work and will themselves participate in the work as they visit the local communities, the schools, etc.
5. Mobile services: For certain communities which have no health centres nor sub-centres the Department of Medical Services developed a service known as "Your Clinic on Wheels". This service does not consist of a special transport unit installed with clinical equipment but serves as an extension of the health services programme, giving the health nurse mobility to work with population which is otherwise unserved. In some cases this was made possible by a vehicle and in others by a boat. This system has made possible the regular, periodic, short-term visits of the nurse or other professional personnel to reach the

inhabitants in the distant villages and to transport needed supplies and equipment in connexion with their work. The Red Cross Volunteers are organized to assist this medical personnel in these services as well.

6. The staffing of the "mobile" units is the same as that of the public health centres who use part of their time to go out to the people and hold "clinics" in a school, in a private home, under a tree or wherever it is possible to provide services. This mobile service is envisaged as an integral part of the system of health services and will be further developed when more transport is available. Up to the present, the mobile services have fanned out from the capital to the district centres and from there to the communities.

7. School services: In the schools intensive campaigns against vermin and scabies have been carried out. Feeding programmes are also being carried out in the schools with UNICEF assistance and the milk and food distribution being associated with a programme of health and nutrition education. Following a health education workshop in 1956 sponsored by the Medical Services Department, the discussions of teachers and health officers pointed up certain needs of the school children.

8. The Government plans in future to organize a system of immunizations for all pre-school children prior to their entering school.

9. The nursing personnel and the public health inspector have an important role in improving school health services and new efforts are being made to improve the sanitary conditions of the schools.

#### Mass disease control

10. Mass campaigns have reinforced the public health activities in the field of preventive medicine. With UNICEF assistance, the Government conducted a BCG, anti-tuberculosis campaign from September 1953 to April 1954. Over 44,000 persons were tested and 22,000 vaccinated.

11. A malaria eradication programme in British Honduras was approved by the UNICEF Executive Board in September 1956 and is now under way. Progress of this programme is reported in the Executive Director's Report to the present session of the Board (E/ICEF/336/Add.7, para. 23).

#### Red Cross Volunteer Service

12. In British Honduras there is an active service of Red Cross Volunteers who have received some training in ways in which they can aid the public health workers. This includes assisting them at the actual hour of the various clinics, making home visits and assisting in school health services.

13. District of Belize (Population: 37,000)

In the capital of Belize there are two public health centres: the Matron Roberts, and the North Side. Four public health nurse midwives serve the two centres assisted by volunteer workers. Visits are made by the medical officer three times weekly to each health centre. The sanitary inspector and the medical officer, the nutrition officer, chest physician, skin specialist and the public health educator attend the clinics held in the health centres in order to assist in follow-up of the patients.

14. In the rural area of the District of Belize there are four sub-centres: Gale's point, Double Head Cabbage, Caye Caulker, and Maskalls. Each is staffed by a rural health nurse, additional services being provided through the periodic visits of the district medical officer, the public health nurse-midwife, the sanitary inspector and the nutrition officer, all of whom are located in the capital city. With the return in February 1957 of a trained public health educator, his services will strengthen the work carried out in these centres.

15. District of Corozal (Population: 9,400)

A district hospital (twenty-eight beds), to replace that destroyed by the hurricane in 1955, and a public health centre are under construction in the town of Corozal, and there is a sub-centre in Sarteneja, an island off the coast. Two additional sub-centres are planned to be completed in 1958 and 1959 in San Joaquin and Caledonia, the communities providing the premises and the Government contributing £500 for each centre.

16. In this district as elsewhere, the health centre is staffed by a public health nurse, midwife and a sanitary inspector, assisted by the district medical officer and by the periodic visits of supervisory personnel from the Medical Services Department in Belize.

17. District of Orange Walk (Population: 7,600)

In the district hospital (eleven beds) at Orange Walk, there is a health centre located in the hospital. The medical officer and the hospital nurse (who is not a public health nurse) are responsible for the services, which are at present primarily curative. As in other districts the services available at the health centre are strengthened by periodic visits of personnel from the Medical Services Department in Belize. A nurse, now in Jamaica on fellowship, will, upon completing her public health training, be in charge of the health centre. There is one sub-centre at Progreso staffed by a rural health nurse.

18. District of Cayo (Population: 10,600)

The District Hospital here (seventeen beds) as in Orange Walk, houses the one-room health centre which is supervised by a public health nurse. Each of the two sub-centres in Roaring Creek and Benque Viejo is staffed by a rural health nurse.

19. District of Stann Creek (Population: 8,800)

Across the street from the District Hospital (forty-four beds) a new health centre has been built, which is staffed by a public health nurse, a midwife and a sanitary inspector with additional services provided by the district medical officer and personnel of the Medical Services Department. All curative work is handled in the hospital. Sub-centres are located at Pomona, Placencia, Sittee River and Seine Bight. Pomona and Placencia are at present staffed by a rural health nurse, and this is the staffing planned also for the two new sub-centres which will be served periodically by District personnel and members of the staff of Medical Services Department.

20. District of Toledo (Population: 9,000)

The District Hospital (seventeen beds) in Punta Gorda has a health centre in the hospital staffed by one of the hospital nurses and in which most of the services are curative. A nurse now being trained in public health in Jamaica is to be in charge of this centre upon her return from Jamaica. The sub-centres are located at Monkey River, Barranco, San Antonio and Crique Sarco. All but Crique Sarco are staffed by a rural health nurse and it is planned that Crique Sarco shall be similarly staffed.