

UNICEF IN BELLAGIO

A Memoir

Dr. Herman D. Stein

UNICEF HISTORY PAPER

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by Dr. Herman D. Stein



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Herman D. Stein was on the faculty of the Columbia University School of Social Work at the time of the Bellagio conference. He was later with Case Western Reserve University, first as Dean of the School of Applied Social Sciences, then as University Vice President and Provost and finally as University Professor. In that capacity, he was free to take academic leave at any time, and did so at various periods until 1981 as consultant and Senior Advisor to the Executive Director of UNICEF.

Appreciation is extended to Diwakar Vadapalli for his excellent secretarial and research service. HDS

A UNICEF History Paper

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COVER PHOTO: © UNICEF/1964/Photographer Unknown
Bellagio Conference Participants and Staff
1-7 April 1964

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TRIBUTE TO A TRUE GURU

Among the intellectual giants in the history of UNICEF, Dr. Herman D. Stein stands atop a very special pedestal. Professor Stein served as senior advisor to UNICEF's first three Executive Directors. He personally trained and nurtured a whole generation of UNICEF's leaders and managers, including yours truly.

The graduates of the Herman Stein school of inter-regional staff training seminars are a breed apart in UNICEF. For several decades, they helped shape the policies, priorities and profile of UNICEF as one of the most respected, loved and effective entities of the UN system.

In this brief memoir "UNICEF in Bellagio" Herman Stein recounts the story of a very special International Conference on Planning for Children in Developing Countries which he helped organize in Bellagio, Italy, in April 1964, that became a milestone for changing the way the world views children and their well-being. Until that time, the well-being of children was largely seen as a charitable enterprise. And UNICEF was seen as a small do-gooder UN agency providing relief aid for children in emergencies and campaigning against some infectious diseases.

The Bellagio conference changed all that. Attended by some of the sharpest minds of the time with world-class expertise in the fields of economic planning, health, nutrition, education, demography and social policy, the outcome of the conference firmly established that the well-being of children was the essential foundation of national development.

It also transformed UNICEF from a relief fund into a development agency. Much of what UNICEF does even today, had its roots in Bellagio: the life-cycle approach, the concern for the "whole child", multi-sectoral approach to programming, empowerment of women, participatory community development, working with non-governmental organization, carrying out comprehensive situation analysis of women and children, and using it for advocacy purposes.

The good work of UNICEF, under the capable advisement of Professor Stein, earned it the Nobel Peace prize in 1965. It earned UNICEF the respect and credibility to be designated as the world's lead agency for children during the 1979 International Year of the Child

Bellagio was a precursor to the historic World Summit for Children in 1990. Indeed, some of the great achievements of UNICEF in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s – the Child Survival and Development Revolution, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the goals for children in the 1990s that eventually became the basis for the UN's Millennium Development Goals, were all built on the solid foundation of Bellagio.

This brief memoir coming out as Herman Stein approaches his 90th birthday, is an occasion for all of us in UNICEF to pay tribute to a True Guru whose life and work inspires us to redouble our efforts to make this a better world for children.



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Kul C. Gautam
Deputy Executive Director
New York
20 September 2007

Among the intellectual giants in the history of UNICEF, Dr. Herman D. Stein stands atop a very special pedestal.



BEGINNINGS

Bellagio is a charming village in Italy overlooking Lake Como. A Center is there, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, for international study and meetings.

For UNICEF veterans, the term Bellagio is more than a place name. It signifies a surge of concentrated effort that imbued this agency with new purpose, expanding its scope and influence. It was in Bellagio that UNICEF held its unprecedented International Conference on Planning for Children in Developing Countries April 1-7, 1964.

I was asked by former staff of UNICEF to tell the story of the Bellagio conference, and its aftermath. I am the only living member of the Secretariat which planned the meeting, as well as being its rapporteur. I was encouraged to write about this event and its impact from my point of view. I agreed, despite misgivings, trusting that readers would take into account that this is a document by someone approaching 90 years of age and there are bound to be slippages of memory and uneven appraisal of what is significant. I appreciated the interest of the agency in having a witnessed report of the Bellagio phenomenon, so significant in its consequences.

That the conference took place at all was remarkable, given the questions which had been raised about UNICEF's status. First known as the International Children's Emergency Fund (ICEF), it had become accepted as a bona fide United Nations agency after demonstrating its high quality during a probationary period.

UNICEF's mission was the timely supply and delivery of mountains of goods – including a variety of foods, machinery, medicine et al – to help the multitudes of suffering children in post-war Europe. Its leadership, however, insisted that ICEF reach all post-war regions in distress, including those in Asia and Africa. They also insisted that the agency would not take sides in the East-West controversy – at that time very heated – maintaining the cardinal principle of UNICEF that the cause of children surmounted political conflicts.

Over the course of these early years UNICEF officials learned much about the countries to which they were shipping supplies, enough for these officials and senior staff to warrant being sources of opinions and advice. However, UNICEF was limited in transmitting its views because of a restriction it had accepted at the time of its entry into the UN family of agencies. That restriction held that any policy or program decision of UNICEF that related to the functions or interests of a specialized agency, would have to be approved by that agency

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before it could be implemented. Maurice Pate¹, Executive Director and E.J.R. Heyward, Deputy Executive Director, considered this condition to be too short-sighted an assessment of their agency's potential to contribute to the development plans of poor countries. Such planning was a subject of great interest in the 1960s, especially in the United Nations.

What was now under consideration... was an approach that would encourage and enable states to develop national policies specifically directed to the well-being of children.

Emergency supply operations to serve children in war torn or other disaster areas remained crucial to UNICEF's mission, and could have developmental aspects. However, what was now under consideration by UNICEF's leaders was an approach that would encourage and enable states to develop national policies specifically directed to the well-being of children. An effort to launch this approach, by preparing the way for state-wide study of the needs of children, on a national basis was made by UNICEF. A key figure in this effort was Dr. Georges Sicault, UNICEF's Director in Europe, who advocated a comprehensive model of enquiry of the condition of children by states, referred to by UNICEF later on as the 'country approach'.

UNICEF's resources were not sufficient at that time to permit venturing into this broad field. It saw itself as having a significant role in aiding development, however, concentrating selectively on the needs of children. The question became how to exercise this role.

One means considered was the formation of an inter-ministerial commission in each state to coordinate the national effort for children. However constructed, a top level governmental process could ensure that every sector in the state's national plan was examined for its implications in meeting the needs of the child population. Whether UNICEF should attempt to help a country's development by promoting such an approach

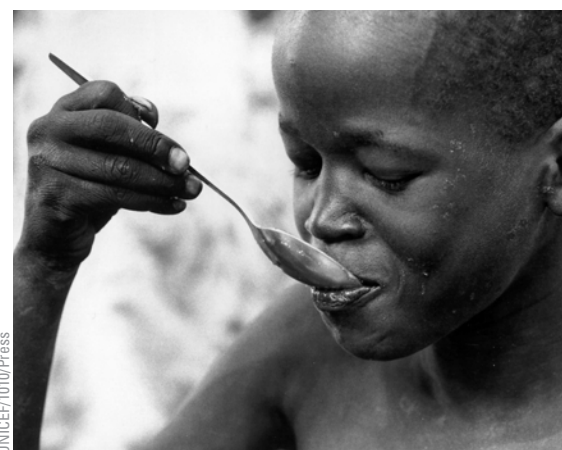
¹ Maurice Pate died some months after the conference for which he had prepared an opening statement. He had the foresight to appoint Heyward as senior Deputy Executive Director, responsible for the Bellagio program.

was questionable. As indicated, earlier efforts to encourage the formation of national policy for children, on the basis of systematic study, had not led to a strong positive support.

UNICEF was successful in promoting itself to the industrialized countries and to governments on a humanitarian basis. Its public relations efforts – such as the scores of well publicized flights by the entertainer Danny Kaye to villages and towns in the third world – made the UNICEF name evoke sympathy and support. Sentimental appeal, however, could not be used to communicate to the general public or decision makers the fundamental role children would play in constructing a viable society. It was largely on the basis of how their children were raised and cared for that the future of their country would depend.

An orientation fixed on development would require planners to do their work drawing on future human resources over a period of many years. For developing countries this is a particularly arduous task, even assuming the condition of national economic growth. The baby who will eventually be part of these resources will first have to survive, live through its hazardous first year, get to school with enough nutrition to avoid serious infections and diseases, then learn its trade, operate its machinery, cultivate its talents, and become a fully productive adult. Emotional factors are not included in the planning track.

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DECISION FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Pate and Heyward consulted with senior colleagues and a number of authorities – from different backgrounds of professional, regional and international experience – about this approach to development via planning for children. From these discussions came the recommendation that UNICEF should call an international conference to explore the issues involved in helping poor countries meet the needs of their children more effectively.

Pate and Heyward decided to accept this challenge. For an agency that had only recently achieved formal UN status, to set such a goal was considered by some in the UN system as too bold, if not arrogant. UNICEF was considered a small player in the field of development cooperation. The judgement of UNICEF leadership, however, was that the subject they were considering was too important and too neglected to be considered at any but the highest levels of international expertise.

In effect, UNICEF was declaring its aim to focus governmental attention on the wellbeing of the child population in order to enhance its developmental prospects.

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Heyward and Pate next formed a small secretariat made up of colleagues whose task was to build a framework for the international conference, soon named “planning for children in developing countries”. I was asked to join the secretariat and serve as Conference Rapporteur, and accepted. The agenda was drafted and the process began for inviting participants to the conference.

In drawing up a list of individuals to invite, we sought representation by government or profession from both developing and industrialized countries. As I recall, we set a target of 35-40 participants. Obviously, not everyone we invited could accept, but those who did constituted a very satisfactory group to us in numbers and quality.

The specialized agencies communicated no official objections to a conference of this significance without their involvement. However, at least three of the agencies informally raised the question but did not pursue it at higher UN levels. Within the secretariat most of us surmised that their refraining from objecting to UNICEF’s ambitious plan was due to the influence of Mr. Heyward, whom UN officials would be loath to offend. While we did not single out individuals from UN agencies we gladly welcomed those who came.

CONFERENCE VOICES

We were fortunate to assemble authority figures who were deeply interested in the issues. All regions were represented, and there was a wide range of expertise from government and academia and international organizations.

From the start there was lively interaction among the participants.

English was the language of the conference with occasional use of French.

More important than a common language was the ease with which discussion took place. This was largely due to the fact that most of those present had worked or at least met one another in the course of their careers and could relate informally.

Hans Singer of the United Nations, widely recognized as an outstanding economist, was one of the most active discussants, contributing significantly to lightening the mood, as well as, clarifying the issues when this effort was necessary.

In this contribution, he was reinforced by Dame Eileen Younghusband, an expert in social welfare policy and training. She and I had worked together over the course of many years. At the time of the conference Dame Eileen and I were active in the International Association of Schools of Social Work, where I succeeded her as president.

In her distinguished, quiet manner she had a similar effect in tempering the discussion. Having consulted in many parts of the world she was at home in any discussion that pertained to the function and training of social welfare personnel.

I do not remember having met Mr. A.Z.N. Swai in Tanganyika, but I knew at least one of his staff very well, C.D. Msuya, who was Director of Community Development, a division of government with which I was consulting. I may indeed have suggested Swai for the conference, because of the consistency with which Tanganyika developed its plans with hard targets, aiming for systemic improvement, under the strong respected leadership of Julius Nyerere, President of the newly independent Tanganyika.

Although Tunisia had recently become independent, it did not have the same experience as Tanganyika. Mr. Ben Salah, Secretary of

Throughout the meeting some participants conveyed their conviction that a world of substantially heightened international understanding, oriented to peace, was possible particularly if these positive values were communicated to children through the educational systems.

State for Planning and Finance, was eloquent in describing the frustrations as well as the opportunities for his country. He noted that the countries in Africa which recently became independent were still very much influenced by their colonial past in choosing their path to development.

Professor Eugen Pusic and I had known each other for several years through our activity with the International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW), and had become friends. One would rightly judge, from his lugubrious lecture manner, that Professor Pusic was not an optimist, but neither was he a pessimist. He was more a thoughtful skeptic, asking penetrating and provocative questions.

When it came to discussion of the 'social' and 'economic' in development Professor Tinbergen and his fellow economist Professor Bobrowski both preferred not to spend too much time on definitions. In their view the social and economic were interwoven elements of one process which we call development. Dr. Studenikin added that the planning process for children should identify both sets of elements.

Dean Charles Schottland was a prominent figure in policy making bodies in the United States Department of Health Education and Welfare, before he became Dean at Brandeis University. He was able to speak knowledgeably about his government's preference for an interdepartmental coordinating committee composed of thirty-eight federal agencies dealing with children and youth, rather than one central planning body.

Professor Sauvy referred to the demographic and economic trends in Latin America, emphasizing their impact on the numbers of neglected and dependent children, especially in the urban areas.

Throughout the meeting some participants conveyed their conviction that a world of substantially heightened international understanding, oriented to peace, was possible particularly if these positive values were communicated to children through the educational systems. Robert Debre was one who expressed with deep feelings of hope that the coming generation could put an end to mass injustice and tyranny. By contrast, Helena Junqueira was eloquent in speaking of the evils perpetrated against children through child slavery and abuse. She expressed the views, shared by others, that the protection of children should be one of the most important goals in an international movement.

The discussion elicited perspectives ranging from inspiring idealism to blunt realism. It was not so much a question of differing objectives among the participants as one of differing perceptions of the political and economic forces with which they would have to contend.

LEADERSHIP

E.J.R. Heyward



Well before the Bellagio conference was launched, Dick Heyward had achieved a strong reputation as a brilliant planner and leader in international technical undertakings. Heyward was clearly recognized as such at the conference, and lived up to his impressive reputation for understanding nuances of organizational relationships and bureaucratic maneuvers. More important, he was respected for his integrity, the high level of trust he had earned

through his experience with people of all ranks. His penetrating intelligence marked the care with which he studied problems and issues, and his openness to new ideas added to the esteem in which he was held. Moreover, though many regarded him with awe, he was genuinely modest and avoided personal publicity. Once the decision was made to hold the international roundtable conference he could draw on his organizational relationships to get support.

A great many decisions had to be taken quickly in the weeks prior to the opening of the conference. I found Dick Heyward always calm and resolute, ready to focus on the problem at hand.

NATIONAL POLICY FOR CHILDREN

A premise for the conference, the participants were reminded, was that children and youth represent the future of any development plan. If only for that reason, a national program of investment in their care would be justified. It is much more difficult to undo all that goes wrong in the childhood years, than to capitalize on sound preparation during these years. In particular, investment in prevention of the major ills that affect children, and that can lead to death or permanent injury, should be at the highest priority. Specifically, preventive provisions – such as nutrition, clean water, immunizations, and girls' education – should represent a much higher proportion of the health budgets of the family, the community, and the state.

Prof. Rao, Chairman, urged the conference to raise the broad questions of the place of children in national policy.

This theme was in his opening statement when Prof. Rao, Chairman, urged the conference to raise the broad questions of the place of children in national policy. As a major illustration he referred to governmental responsibility, to impart to the public basic knowledge of growth and development to adult years. Such information, continuously expanding, should be accessible to the public through whatever channels are available or can be created, whether the subject concerns the importance of clean water, the proper food for a pregnant woman, how children can improve their learning, or which nutrients would help prevent blindness.

A policy to have a knowledge reservoir and transmission center for the protection of children's health, requires setting priorities about subject matter and freedom to explore new knowledge areas. Increasingly, the world of science provides measures to assure higher expectations for wholesome child development. The knowledge that has been gained about the rudiments of prevention of illness and disease is considerable and available freely, where the state and the community wish it so.

There was strong consensus that having a single agency in any state responsible for policy questions relating to children was not wise. States should take the responsibility, however, for disseminating and interpreting to the public those findings that have been proven effective, so that they can readily be put to use at home, school, and community.

One may draw the inference from Prof. Rao that states should have the responsibility to become informed of findings that enhance the chances of good health for children, at the various stages of their lives. A policy to that effect is needed. The necessary personnel should be designated just as they are to examine the implications of new findings in physics and chemistry to be useful for military or industrial purposes.

It did not take long before the conference participants made clear their conviction that safeguarding the well being of children is vital for a country to progress, but is not automatically achieved. As Dr. Georges Sicault and others emphasized, it is necessary to know what the national situation is before a government and supporting agencies can mount a program to improve it. A government would be impelled to design a format of the policies and resources necessary to make progress, and a hierarchy of needs to address. Thus, no matter how poor a country may be and how limited its resources, it can evolve a plan based on the realities of the country and its children. This is a basic investment for a national program aiming to increase the likelihood that a newborn would achieve a productive adulthood.

Everyone could agree that inevitable crises arise at different stages of the life cycle from the womb to adulthood. Preparing for and coping with these crises are the responsibility of family, community, and state. To the extent each can acquire necessary knowledge, and has the essential resources, the more likely families would be to enhance their capacity for healthy survival of their children, and building national human resources.

For the goal of development, priority efforts should go to prepare for the inevitable crises in the life cycle. Social policy should support these efforts as well as innovative programs destined to become stable parts of the total government effort. Such were the advances made when many governments drew on the Bellagio premises, for some fifteen years, to emphasize, for example, the life-cycle "whole-child" approach and multi-sectoral services along with community development.

Health and Nutrition Policy

One of the first child protection issues that arises is saving children from early death. It is a widely held view, among medical authorities, that, of all the hazards confronting children, the most pervasive in developing countries is food deprivation in infancy. Drs. Debre and Gopalan presented with great feeling the ramifications of disease in young children, directly or indirectly caused by malnutrition. The many diseases recorded as leading to infant death, are at their root, they maintained, stemming from nutritional disorders. One would not know that simply by examining clinical classifications of infant and child morbidity.

They also emphasized the importance of impressing on mothers, through national media, as a matter of social policy, the nutritional needs

As an illustration of UNICEF's involvement in development planning one may cite the work in India, where I was research advisor to Victor Soler-Sala who was a planning consultant. One of the results of UNICEF's entry into the planning process in India was the spread of early childcare centers, called 'balwadis', where multi-sectoral programs included play and language instruction, balanced nutrition for the children, and mother care. The planning begun about 1970 has yielded some 600,000 balwadis. Other versions of early childcare centers were introduced in scores of countries, following the ideas first propounded in Bellagio.

Sometimes extreme measures are employed to give the system a running start – for example, in Tanganyika, after achieving independence, reducing the proportion of children in elementary grades to fifty percent of the child population. This was in order to provide enough of the education budget to train a cadre of teachers who would prepare teachers!

of the child at each stage of his or her life. This usually means the creation of maternal or maternal/child health centers, for it cannot be assumed that the mother has had enough preparation for the dietary needs of her offspring before giving birth. Conference participants agreed that the failure to equip the prospective mother with information was a failure attributable to the absence of education when the girl was of school age.

Scientific knowledge to help prevent root causes of disability, disease, and death is growing constantly and should be made available to the public. The advancing knowledge of nutrition, in particular, should result in greater availability to children of more nutritious food, including proteins. Maternal health centers are becoming more aware, for example, of the importance of protein-rich food for children in their early childhood years.

It should be noted that the Balwadi concept attempted to put into practice the principle of multi-sectoral contributions so that the “whole child” is affected and a realistic balance can be achieved to aid the child’s growth process. Thus, there would, for example, be supplementary nutrition, educational toys and other play materials, early reading for those who wish to pursue it, health inspection, including immunization and early treatment.

With regard to health planning, Dr. Gopalan held the view that the cost of hospital care and curative services, however more visible, are disproportionately high compared to investment in preventive measures. He would urge planners to bear this in mind and repeatedly stressed that a combination of preventive measures represented the most effective barriers to disease – measures such as clean water, sanitary facilities, immunization, maternal education and nutrition.

A.Z.N. Swai, the Minister of Developmental Planning in Tanganyika, illustrated the problem and the anticipated solution in a developing country by referring to the health plan in his country where one fourth to one third of all children die before reaching adult life. The plan calls for one health center for every 500,000 of the population and one hospital bed for every thousand. Their goal was to increase life expectancy from 38 to 50 by 1980. A systematic program of healthcare for women was also presented.



Education Policy

To meet a country's perception of its needs is a complex, economic and politically driven challenge everywhere. For developing countries it is most difficult because of a variety of stubborn factors. For one, poor countries generally have very high birth rates as well as very high infant mortality rates.

If their economy requires an increase in productivity it also requires machinery and manpower to go with that objective. This means having enough personnel who can understand the technical language – personnel educated beyond the primary grade – to a level where they can teach and direct.

Reference to special programs for women and girls was described in many country-plans. For the most part, these programs were designed to prepare them for motherhood. Note also was made, however, of the importance to the community of educating girls along with boys, so they could contribute more actively to the life and decisions of their community. Mr. Heyward gave particular references to the need for raising the status of women, and noted that in most developing countries the women shared responsibility for arduous labor in the field and in the town, as well as being responsible for care of her children and her home.

Heyward and Prof. Sauvy laid stress on the importance which should be given to learning principles for life. They were referring to values such as justice, loyalty, and honesty being demonstrated and incorporated in the total learning environment. If these values are absorbed in childhood, Heyward and others would maintain, they can be guides through life and would help shape the kind of society the children would have in their future.

Teaching such principles does not depend on classroom lessons or lectures but on how they emerge in the interaction of children among themselves and adults, particularly through the educational system.

Besides the overwhelming difficulties in preparing a sizeable proportion of the population beyond literacy, there is the issue of whether the concept of education should apply only to formal schooling.



UNICEF/98-2146/Pirozzi

Child labor is often an accepted means for childcare.



UNICEF/0172/Press

The conference made clear the necessity to plan resources for in-migrants, for health, education, housing and social services.

While education of the child is the responsibility of the family, the community, and the state, the latter's educational planners can promote the development of ethical precepts within the curriculum as a curricular objective.

Urbanization, Industrialization, and Child Welfare Policy Issues

During periods of industrialization, young people from agricultural areas crowd urban centers. Third world countries, in particular, come under heavy pressure. Agricultural production deteriorates and youth flock to the cities, aspiring to higher education followed, they hope, by high income. The agricultural areas lose medical and nursing personnel, with consequent rise in maternal and infant mortality.

While the gross domestic product may go up, the needs of children become more demanding. Breakup of families frequently gives rise to separation of children from both their parents and leads to the creation of collective facilities for orphans or other abandoned children. Child labor is often an accepted means for childcare. Special training for those adults who are responsible for children in the collective facilities is virtually unknown.

Periods of rapid rise in industrialization and urbanization also tend to have serious political conflicts. Providing for the needs of children is made even more difficult under such circumstances, yet much depends on the quality and availability of comprehensive state planning if the needs of children are to be addressed to any significant degree. The conference made clear the necessity to plan resources for in-migrants, for health, education, housing and social services. Urban community development can provide a way of orienting families. In planning services, the participation of community forces and institutions is of particular importance as members become involved and then share in the benefits of improved living conditions.

In the area of social welfare, special services for the most vulnerable groups among children are called for but priority should be given to widespread needs. Such needs can be met, in part, by community centers offering a range of activities that include the education of mothers, day-care facilities, and recreational provisions. Vulnerable and child and youth groups require special services, economic and other assistance to deprived families to the care of abandoned, neglected or delinquent children and special resources for handicapped children. It was essential

that preventive services be developed parallel with treatment services. The need for preventive action in family protection was emphasized. Child and youth protection must be an integral part of family protection programs.

Many of the services required to care for the children who needs special help – whether inside or outside their home – have been modeled after those available in the industrialized countries. Indeed, a number of developing countries have sought directly to emulate the programs available in Europe and North America, with uneven results.

National Policy Approach

The excitement that was generated by the announcement that the conference in Bellagio had opened, quickly reached all corners of the developing world. Prior to the opening, arrangements had been made to have similar conferences in principal regions and sub-regions, in the developing world, including, most rapidly, Chile, Addis-Ababa, and Manila.

Staff from headquarters, specially trained by Dr. Iwaszkiewicz, head of planning, was available to each of these duplicate conferences. They were to help set in motion an approach to analyze the impact on children of planning in each major sector. They also were prepared in particular to suggest ideas for the sectoral plans that were developmental in function. Not only were they now able to communicate freely with state officials about the government's plans but could engage external consultants for planning on issues for which they were not prepared.

The report on the Bellagio conference was partly prepared during the sessions and completed immediately thereafter. Translation into five languages had been arranged beforehand so that the report could be distributed early to the widest possible public and made available for the mini conferences. The fact that so many actions were taken by UNICEF to assure the most widespread interest in the issues related to planning for children, gave the subject great prominence. UNICEF had succeeded in placing the well-being of children at the center of world concern for national development in the poorer countries.

As noted, planning for the Bellagio conference included preparations for successive related meetings in Chile, Addis-Ababa, and Manila. Drawing on material used in Bellagio UNICEF staff had arranged programs for government planning personnel and consultants. Any doubt about UNICEF's role with planning commissions having been resolved, it remained for staff and consultants, prepared for this purpose, to help governments plan programs for children directed to national development.

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IMPACT OF THE CONFERENCE

The very fact that the conference was held with outstanding international participants, dealing with issues of direct concern to UNICEF, meant that the agency's potential sphere of influence had greatly broadened. UNICEF was now in a position to consult with government figures on the impact of their decisions on the well being and future of children and youth.

Internal Impacts: Strengthening Knowledge Base

UNICEF was now in a position to consult with government figures on the impact of their decisions on the well being and future of children and youth.

1. Soon after the Bellagio conference, UNICEF increased the proportion of personnel recruited from developing countries, both in local and international positions. This was directly a result of Heyward's influence.
2. Without any formal statements being made, it seemed evident that UNICEF was freer to use its independent judgement and could vary from the criteria of UN protocol. The deliberations at Bellagio provided Dick Heyward with the means for UNICEF to expand its knowledge of child development and its ramifications. UNICEF was to be known as the United Nations agency intent on being informed, as well as attentive, to the needs of the world's children
3. One effort Mr. Heyward supported was the publication by UNICEF of a journal called "Assignment Children/ Les Carnets de l'Enfance", edited by Pierre Mandl. The journal covered a wide variety of subjects dealing with governmental and non-governmental approaches to deal with problems both on a policy and practitioner level. It dealt with the cross-cultural interests of a variety of professions and was broadly distributed. Published out of Geneva between the 1960's and mid 1980s, Assignment Children helped to establish children's studies as a subset of other development disciplines (public health, urban planning, education and so on) and fix UNICEF as a player at the edge of the academic world.
4. An approach to broaden the outlook of the junior and middle professional staff was to introduce an annual three-week inter-regional staff seminar. Some twenty five to thirty staff members selected by the top regional or headquarters officers would be meeting in a developing country or a university research institute concentrating on development studies.

In the first instance they would do field observations, participate in discussions with indigenous professionals and government officials and in the latter instance they would be brought into the world of

research, whether of issues of social policy or biological sciences that bore on the development of children. In these seminars participants would select the chairpersons for their working sessions so that the experience was collegial rather than hierarchical. For many, it was a new experience to freely raise questions and voice alternative views, in a formal, let alone international institution. It was Mr. Heyward's view and mine when we organized these seminars that freedom of staff to voice their opinions in a responsible fashion made for a healthier organization, both in morale, and in finding new ways of solving problems and moving ahead. Each seminar was evaluated by its participants immediately after it was concluded and six to nine months afterwards. The evaluations were very positive and also provided cues for improvement and experimentation as time went on.

5. With the emphasis given to planning at the conference, the importance of gauging the extent to which targets were met was of major concern. With Heyward's backing, evaluation was increasingly designated as a necessary component of any program to be executed. The establishment of an office in UNICEF headquarters for evaluation of programs was a marked innovation. Evaluation had not been built into plans which UNICEF conducted until late seventies when an office was created to develop program evaluation as a requirement.

External Impacts: Initiatives and Partnerships

6. With its standing high and resources solid UNICEF was able to join the specialized agencies in joint campaigns, particularly in health issues. These campaigns usually involved mass immunization which required the cooperation of local leaders. UNICEF gained considerable expertise joining in these campaigns with WHO.

At the start, UNICEF undertook cooperation with NGOs very gingerly, because the experience of NGOs and their standards of operation were unknown. In time, UNICEF would provide help not only with supplies, but share their experience in reconstruction and management.

7. Each of the specialized agencies now felt able to conduct joint projects with UNICEF, with initiatives taken both by UNICEF and the specialized agencies.

UNICEF joined WHO in 1968 in a campaign for the use of oral

In the 1970's UNICEF used its increased status to join in protest over the marketing practices of leading milk formula producers and was outspoken in a difficult public campaign....It is doubtful that UNICEF would have engaged in this kind of public conflict prior to the Bellagio conference.

rehydration therapy (ORT) which is estimated to save over one million children a year. UNICEF made separate agreements with many NGOs to participate in this campaign. ORT was featured as an essential element in UNICEF's Child Survival and Development Revolution (CSDR) launched by Executive Director Jim Grant in the 1980s.

8. In the 1970's UNICEF used its increased status to join in protest over the marketing practices of leading milk formula producers and was outspoken in a difficult public campaign. The scientific and health communities were embattled legally and financially over the cause of protecting babies from depending on bottled milk. It was not the milk itself which was objectionable, but the fact that purchasing such milk, which mothers in poor countries could ill afford, led to disease and death (Dr. Derick Jelliffe, an expert whom I first met when he was doing research at the Makerere University Medical School, is credited with popularizing his cause, "In Africa, a bottle fed baby is a dead baby"). Breast milk, on the other hand, had no such cost and was usually better nutritionally for the baby. This conflict was finally resolved in a legal settlement. It is doubtful that UNICEF would have engaged in this kind of public conflict prior to the Bellagio conference.
9. UNICEF also strengthened relationships with selected NGOs, particularly those engaged in reconstruction, after natural or man-made disasters. While UNICEF offered material support and technical advice, in their humanitarian role, developmental features were highlighted wherever warranted. The NGO Committee on UNICEF (a committee of international non-governmental organizations recognized by UNICEF's Executive Board) sought successfully to highlight areas of cooperation which were of high priority.

An example of a highly specific objective was the program for distribution of vitamin A to prevent blindness along with other measures to change and improve dietary habits of children.

A more diffuse program with wide ramifications in both public and private sectors was the campaign to promote knowledge about the needs of the young child. The combination of efforts by the International Children's Center, the Executive Director of UNICEF, and many members of the NGO Committee on UNICEF during the 1965 session resulted in plans to address the problems caused by ignorance and neglect, by parents and teachers, of the young child's physical, intellectual, and psychological stages of growth. The document summarizing the recommendations was endorsed by 25 leading international NGOs.

New Executive

Henry Labouisse



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Henry Labouisse (informally called Harry) joined UNICEF as Executive Director, following the death of Maurice Pate in 1965. It was a matter of some astonishment that Labouisse's entry into the Executive's position, only a few months after Pate's death, was as smooth as it was. Labouisse was a diplomat, a kindly man, serious about his work

and easy to work with. Instead of there being any rivalry between him and Heyward it was a joining of complementary talents. Labouisse was a support in the exciting post Bellagio atmosphere. The mutually respectful behavior and effectiveness in working together by Labouisse and Heyward added to the sense of pride, indeed affection, with which staff regarded their agency.



UNICEF/5160/Isaac

A LOOK BACK

After fifty years, the changes wrought by the Bellagio conference were vivid.

Beginning as a huge relief operation to aid the devastated populations of war-torn Europe, it extended its span of emergency relief to Asia and Africa. Heyward's leadership of UNICEF was well regarded for its efficiency and responsiveness. However, it could not propose innovations to state bodies or cooperate with specialized agencies without their consent. Post-Bellagio, all such restrictions were lifted.

With public interest rising to rescue the poorest countries of the world, the focus of UNICEF expanded from philanthropic aid to development. Indeed, as President Kennedy noted, the 60's were to become the "development decade." UNICEF prepared for a shift in direction by raising the prospect of its own contribution to development. To explore this issue, Dick Heyward and his colleagues in leadership of UNICEF, invited a world class group of individuals from diverse fields and regions to explore and define the relevant issues of planning for the needs of children in poor countries, for purposes of national development. The international conference in Bellagio was designed to generate the intellectual and political impetus to put meeting these needs into sharp focus.

With public interest rising to rescue the poorest countries of the world, the focus of UNICEF expanded from philanthropic aid to development.

Points of Consensus:

- Children and youth are the future resources for both social and economic development and should themselves be strengthened.
- Trying to repair the ills that can afflict children and youth is very difficult, and every effort should be made to invest in preventive measures, particularly in health. Such measures include proper nutrition, clean water and sanitation, and immunization. A public policy advancing these aims should be statewide.
- Government should make clear the explicit responsibility of the family, the community and the state for the welfare of the children.
- Rather than provide a body in central government to plan for children it is preferable to have a coordinating mechanism reflect the views of all sectors.
- Each sector in its own planning should make clear the implications for children and youth – such as whether the agriculture markets will leave a sufficient supply of protein rich nutrients for the needs of the children.
- Government should make clear to the population of the state the major health problems which are to be addressed, primarily by the public themselves, with resources as far as possible available or provided.
- Education should be provided to the extent possible to prepare for the needs of the future. It should include, in addition to skills and knowledge necessary to be productive adults, formation of values to guide the child through life – values such as honesty, justice, and loyalty.



UNICEF/Iran

UNICEF's record of flexibility, achievement and responsiveness to changing needs led the Nobel Prize committee to award it the Peace prize in 1965. It was a touch of irony that the agency, which had been regarded with some condescension as a supplicant for membership in the official UN ranks, now was crowned with world respect. Bellagio had made its mark. In an acceptance speech for UNICEF, its Board chair stated¹:

It is hoped that it will be possible to incorporate the rights of the child in the economic and social structure of these new states. It is this hope that inspired the invitation that was sent out to attend the round table conference in Italy, initiated by UNICEF in 1964. Those who took part in this conference were ministers, economists, and child-welfare experts. The conclusion arrived at was that, in the long run, no economic development is possible unless the growth of a healthy and enlightened generation of children is given priority in the plans for development.

The impact of the Bellagio round-table conference on UNICEF itself was clear and was expressed in many ways for years to come. It could be detected in the buoyancy of the organization from the moment the week's work was over. Staff was working hard in headquarters and the field, on projects backed by a variety of planning commissions; targets were set and operations geared to clear directions. Effective programs continued in developing countries for support of children smitten by disasters.

The practice withered of seeking specialized agency approval for the technical aspects of projects supported by UNICEF. The formal recognition by the system that UNICEF had become primarily a development rather than a humanitarian organization came in 1972 when UNICEF's annual report was considered in the Second Committee of the Economic and Social Council, on Economic and Financial Questions, rather than the Third Committee, on Humanitarian and Social Affairs².

UNICEF was meeting the challenge Heyward³ and his colleagues had set to contribute to developmental progress. Well after it received the Nobel peace prize

1 Zena, H. (1965). United Nations Children's Fund, the Nobel peace prize 1965. Retrieved June 22, 2007, from http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1965/unicef-lecture.html

2 Black, M. (1986). The children and the nations: the story of Unicef. New York, NY: United Nations Children's Fund.

3 Heyward, and Stein retired from UNICEF in 1981, when the new administration took over.

it continued to arouse support across the world for the contribution it was making in developing countries to the cause of preparing children for constructive and productive adult lives.

There was a strong sense of idealism that permeated the expression of hope that the program goals being developed by UNICEF would be realized.

There was also a strong cautionary note which Dr. Georges Sicault struck, arguing for a hard compromise between "what it would be desirable to do, in the name of the rights of the child, to ensure, on the one hand, for all this complete protection against hunger, sickness and social injustice and to provide adequate preparation for life; and on the other hand, what is necessary for the development of a sound economy, without which the social structure would crumble like a house of cards."⁴

Despite this sober reflection, a recommendation was formulated at the Bellagio meeting for UNICEF and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and with the specialized agencies concerned to explore the possibility of "a thoroughly prepared World Conference" on the place of children and youth in economic and social development.

In 1976 UNICEF was designated lead agency by the United Nations for the International Year of the Child (IYC) 1979. The IYC celebrated the lives of children in all countries and generated new awareness of problems and issues affecting their development and protection.

In 1989, twenty-five years after the Bellagio conference, invitations were sent to heads of State and Government to participate in a World Summit for Children (WSC). A year later the largest gathering of world leaders in history assembled at the United Nations and adopted a Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for implementing the Declaration.

The responsive UNICEF, ready to aid in times of crisis, was now a UNICEF concentrating as well, with imagination and energy, on serving future generations by helping countries meet the needs of their children of today.

4 Georges S. (1964). The reason and objective of a policy for children. (Working paper No. 8, paragraph #24). Presented at the round-table conference: Planning for the needs of children in developing countries. 1-7 April, 1964, Bellagio, Italy.

APPENDIX

Following are the names of the Secretariat

Mr. Maurice Pate – *Executive Director*
Mr. E. J. R Heyward – *Deputy Executive Director (Operations)*
Dr. Georges Sicault – *Director European Office and Special Representative of the Executive Director*
Mr. Edward Iwaszkiewicz – *Assistant Director (Planning)*
Professor Herman D. Stein – *Unicef Consultant, Rapporteur for the conference; Professor, Columbia University School of Social Work*
Mr. Mamoudou Toure – *Consultant to the Executive Director*
Mr. G. V Subba-Rao – *Senior Planning Officer (Asia), New Delhi, India*

The list of participants

Invited:

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Ben Salah – *Secretary of State for Planning and Finance, Tunis, Tunisia*
Professor Czeslaw Bobrowski – *University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland*
Professor Roberts Debre – *Chairman International Children's Center, Paris, France*
Dr. C. Gopalan – *Director National Research Laboratories, Indian Council of Medical Research, Hyderabad, India*
Sra. Helena Iracy Junqueira* – *Chief, Division of Social Service, Prefecture of the Municipality of Sao Paola, Brazil*
Mr. Michael C. Kaser – *Fellow, St. Anthony's College, Oxford University, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*
Professor Georgi A. Miterev – *Chairman, Executive Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR, Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republic*
Professor Eugen Pusic* – *Professor of Public Administration, University of Zagreb, Yugoslavia*
Professor V.K.R.V. Rao – *Member, Indian Planning Commission, New Delhi, India*
Professor Alfred Sauvy – *College de France, Faculty of Social Demography, Paris, France*
Dean Charles Schottland* – *Dean, The Florence Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, United States of America*
Professor M.J. Studenikin – *Head, Institute of Paediatrics of the USSR Medical Sciences Academy, Moscow, Union of Soviet Socialist Republic*
H.E. Mr. A.Z.N. Swai – *Minister for Development Planning, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika*
Professor J. Tinbergen – *Head of the Economic Institute of the Netherlands, The Hague, Netherlands*
Dame Eileen L. Younghusband* – *Advisor on Social Training, National Institute for Social Work Training, London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*

Observers:

Mr. H.W. Singer* – *Special Advisor to the Under-Secretary of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York*
Mr. D.V. Granahan* – *Assistant Director in Charge of the Survey, Research and Development Branch, Bureau of Social Affairs, United Nations, New York*
Mr. J. Riby-Williams* – *Chief, Social Affairs Section, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*
Miss Dorothy Moses* – *Chief, Division of Social Affairs, United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East, Bangkok, Thailand*
Mrs. E. Johnstone – *Chief, Office for the Co-ordination of Women's and Young Workers' Questions, International Labour Organisation, Geneva, Switzerland*
Dr. Marcel Autret – *Director, Nutrition Division, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy*
Mr. E.M. Ojala – *Chief, Agricultural Development Analysis Branch, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy*
Mr. Jean Gutton – *Director, Department of School and Higher Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, France*
Sir John Charles – *Acting Director, Public Health Services, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland*

* indicates participants I knew before the conference

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