

RESTRICTED

E/ICEF
Annex B/10
1 July 1948.

SINGAPORE

A. REPORT OF UNICEF MISSION ON SINGAPORE

GENERAL

At the time of the Japanese surrender the population was at a near-starvation level. Indicative of the depressed physical condition laborers (on advice of nutrition expert) were capable of only three hours of work per day. As a result of an energetic feeding program conditions have improved greatly although nutrition is not yet back to pre-war levels, and stunting of growth is apparent; A feeding program continues for children aged 2-6 through 28 centers where 3,000 children are given one meal per day; This covers the nutritionally most needy children. Other services for mothers and children include six dispensaries in the city and twenty infant welfare centers in the rural (suburban) areas.

The infant mortality rate last year was 87.3 per 1,000 live births.

Because of the limitation of funds for this relatively small population the authorities agreed that the entire allotment would be spent in training child welfare and health personnel (natives), in accordance with the attached proposals of the government.

BUDGET

Training of five native health and welfare persons, places of training to be selected later. One year at \$3,000. each..... \$15,000.

B.C.G. VACCINATION

Tuberculosis has increased, especially in children and the authorities agree BCG vaccination program has high priority. Arrangements are being sought with Australia for training a doctor and a nurse there. The Mission encouraged the health department to make arrangements with Australia also for vaccine supply and recommends ICEF finance training and cost of vaccine.

ADMINISTRATION

Administration of training program will be jointly by social welfare and Health Department, B.C.G. program will be administered by the Health Department.

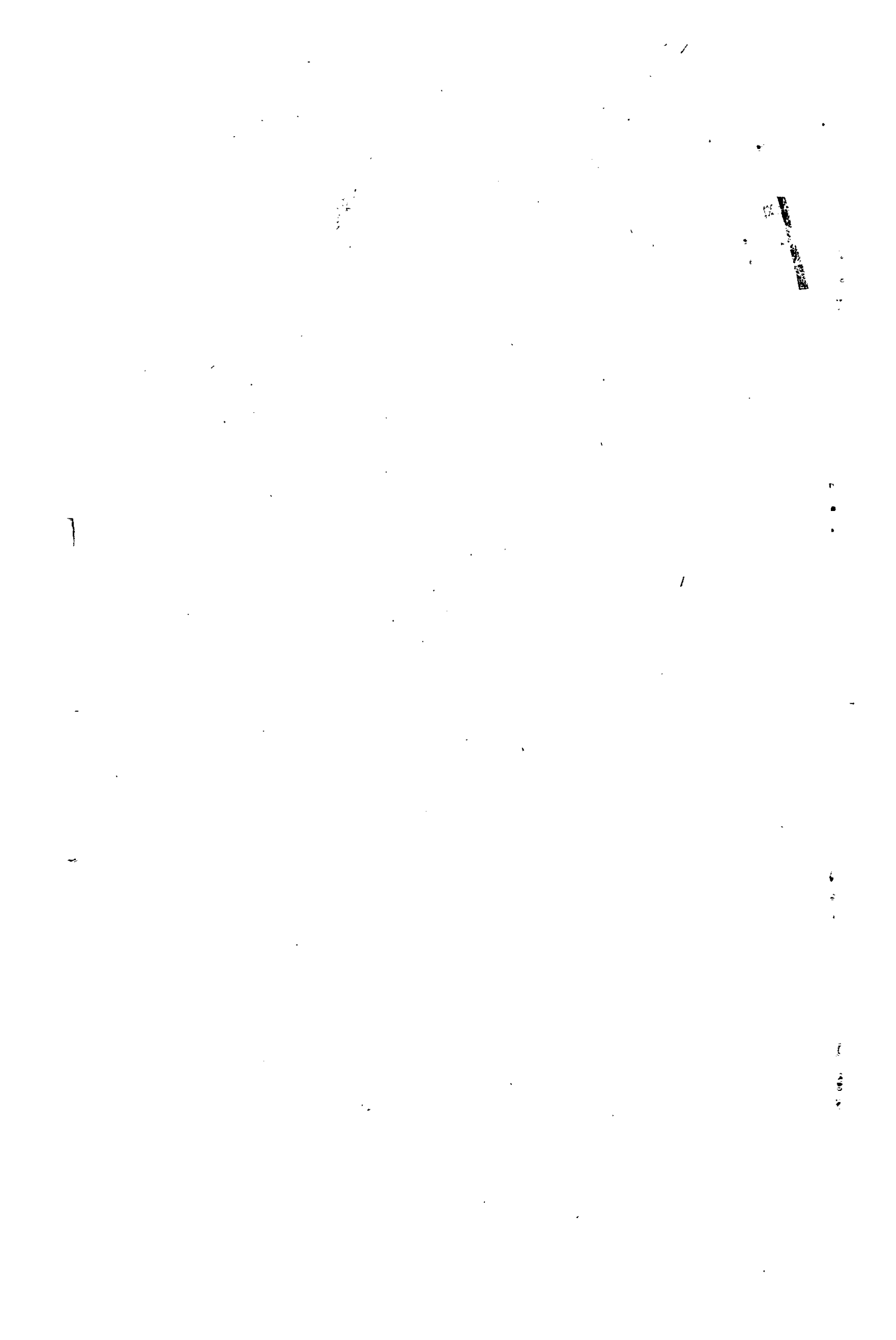
The Mission recommends with enthusiasm the training program. Also recommends in principle the B.C.G. program.

(Thomas Parran)

(C.K. Lakshmanan)

7 June 1948

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OUTLINE OF GOVERNMENT'S REQUEST FOR ICFF ASSISTANCE TO SINGAPORE

Statement of Need for Aid and Present Requirements.

1. Population by Age Groups.

- (a) Total population..... 938,079 (1947 Census)
- (b) Total children under 18 yrs.
in age group..... A Social Survey of Singapore was held in December 1947, when 5,000 households were investigated. According to the figures revealed by this survey 39.4% of the population was under the age of 16 and 17.6% under the age of 7
- (c) Total mothers..... 43,000
(expectant)
(nursing) cannot be estimated.

2. Current and Pre-war Birth and Death Rates.

- (a) Birth rate (living births per
1,000 population)..... 1921 - 29.47
1931 - 36.37
1947 - 45.89
- (b) Infant death rate..... not available for age groups. Totals only.
(i) under 1 year. - 87.30 (rate per 1,000 births)
(ii) 1 - 4 years - 1,363 (total)
(iii) 5 - 9 years - 335 "
(iv) 10 - 14 years - 199 "
(v) 15 - 19 years - 303 "
- (c) Maternal death rate..... 1946 - 3.3 (rate)
1947 - 2.9

At Kandang Kerbau

Maternity Hospital..... 1939 - 1.16 (%)
1946 - 1.17
1947 - 0.92

3. Significant diseases of children (20,000 examined).

Tuberculosis	1.75%	Leprosy	0.27%
Tonsils and Ad.	29.90%	Anaemia, (mostly from intestinal parasites)	21.1%
Enlarged spleen	1.1%	Chicken-pox	1.37%
Defective vision	2.7%	Measles	0.30%
Mumps	2.9%	Diphtheria	0.18%
Malaria	1.05%	Syphilis	0.14%
Whooping Cough	0.23%		
Typhoid	0.13%		

Note: Trachoma: The impression is that this disease has not noticeably increased during the war years. It is kept alive in Malaya only by infected immigrants. It is believed that improved housing and hygiene, added to strict control of immigrants, would be sufficient to reduce this condition to negligible proportions within a ~~short~~ period.

The following conclusions are drawn from inpatient admissions in children.

Tuberculosis shows a definite post-war increase

1936..... 3.40% of all admissions
1947..... 12.68% of all admissions

Malnutrition Some evidence of malnutrition was manifested in 90% of total admissions.

Infantile Beri-Beri is rare.

1937 10.89% of all admissions
1947 0.37% of all admissions

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Malaria Out of 33 cases (total admissions 1,000)

6 were Tertian (Benign)
21 were Aestivo-autumnal (Sub-tertian)
1 were Mixed infection
5 were Unclassified.

The most commonly occurring diseases were:-

Admissions - 1,600	No. of Cases
Diarrhoea and Enteritis under 2 years.....	417
Broncho-pneumonia	289
Tuberculosis (all forms).....	203
Tetanus Neonatorum.....	86
Lobar Pneumonia.....	40
Malaria (all forms).....	33
Ricketts.....	26
Congenital syphilis.....	22
Meningitis (non-tuberculous)	20

Note: V.D. In addition to above, the following cases of venereal disease in children were treated at the Social Hygiene Hospital during 1947:

Congenital syphilis 116
Gonococcal Ophthalmia 30

4. Total Number of Children and Mothers in Institutions.

- (a) Orphans..... In Singapore there is very little specific treatment of orphans as such. The criterion for assistance is proof of need. Even in institutions which are called orphanages, children with one or both parents still alive may be found. The total number of children cared for in institutions in Singapore is 1,273. In addition, partial assistance in the form of one free meal per day is given to a total of 2,800 children.
- (b) Special schools or homes for handicapped children..... There are no special schools or homes for handicapped children, but handicapped children are at present accommodated in existing institutions.
- (c) Day and night nurseries..... No day and night nurseries.
- (d) Day nurseries..... Two day nurseries.

(e) Mother and Baby Centres - milk stations..... There are 28 Infant Welfare Clinics where mothers and babies are treated.

(f) Kindergarten and nursery schools) The total number of children in registered schools of all kinds is 92,466.
(g) Primary schools
(h) Secondary schools It is estimated that possibly 10,000 other children attend unregistered schools. The estimated number of children between the ages of 7 and 15 is 180,000. (This figure is based on the results of the Social Survey).
(i) University student schools

5. Current Food Position.

(f) Evidence of undernutrition:

School Children..... Of a total of 20,852 school children examined during 1947, 31.56 suffered from malnutrition. Previous estimates are as follows:

Pre-war	5%
1946	49.42%
1947	31.56%

Pre-school..... Of 4,050 children attending feeding centres during 1947, 92% presented decayed deciduous teeth, 30% suffered from anaemia, 20% dry skin, 7% angular stomatitis, and 45% were in poor physical condition generally.

II - Statement re Administration of Proposed Programme: and

III - Statement re Proposed Programme.

After discussion it was considered that there is no shortage of food-stuffs, clothing, or medical equipment supplies in Singapore, which could be satisfactorily made up out of the sum available for distribution in this area under the I.C.E.F. Singapore has, however, suffered severely as a result of the war in that since 1940 a large number of young persons have had their studies broken and there is a serious shortage not only of qualified persons, but also of persons with the basic education on which to found technical knowledge. It is felt that a great deal could be done by sending local students abroad to receive training in up-to-date methods regarding child health and welfare. The type of persons who would benefit most by such training would be nurses, and active welfare workers who have already acquired experience of local conditions. They should be primarily selected for their ability to train numbers of other workers on their return. Their courses would be worked out in conjunction with the authorities in London who plan courses for overseas students. Courses in child welfare at the Great Ormonde Street Hospital and training of workers at children's centres would be the type of study envisaged.

It is estimated that one student could be maintained in England for approximately \$3,000 for one year. It is suggested that possibly 5 students might be selected, and that they should come from persons at present employed in the Medical Department, the Municipal Health Department, and the Social Welfare Department.

B.C.G. Vaccination

Apart from the above proposals, the question was discussed as to what might be done by means of the Fund towards the approach to the problem of Tuberculosis through B.C.G. vaccination. While the problem of Tuberculosis is an extremely important health problem in the tropics, the recent increase in this disease in children in Singapore is particularly significant.

It is understood that Australia is planning to manufacture B.C.G. vaccine. In conjunction with the Director of Medical Services of the Federation of Malaya, it is proposed to make enquiries of the authorities in Australia with a view to the possibility of sending at least one Medical Officer and a Public Health Nurse to that Country to observe methods of manufacture and to study in detail the methods and techniques of the field operations. If suitable arrangements can be made for the training of such persons, a definite proposal to the I.C.E.F. will be made for the cost of transportation and living expenses for a period of approximately 6 months.

The Municipal Health Authorities in Singapore have selected a competent Public Health Nurse who is being sent to the United Kingdom for studies in B.C.G. It is hoped, therefore, that the nucleus of one Medical Officer and two Nurses may be sufficient to inaugurate the programme in Singapore.

In the event that the above plans materialise, a request will be made to the I.C.E.F. also to furnish B.C.G. vaccine.

Prepared by:

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20 May, 1948.

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