CHAPTER V

THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)
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The UNICEF was established by the General Assembly on December 11, 1946 on an emergency basis, primarily for the purpose of assisting children in war-devastated areas. Originally it was known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. It was created as a temporary body to provide emergency aid to the children who were victims of war. The General Assembly of the United Nations, on December 11, 1946, passed a resolution creating "an International Children's Emergency Fund to be utilized and administered, to the extent of its available resources, for the benefit of children ....... victims of aggression to assist in their rehabilitation; for the benefit of children ........receiving assistance from the UNRRA; for children health purposes generally giving high priority to children of countries victims of aggression."

After its establishment the UNICEF took over the work which had been carried out by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in assisting mothers and children in war-devastated countries.

By 1950, UNICEF had completed its major crash relief programme in Europe. At that time the continued existence of UNICEF was uncertain for a time. But in response to an increasingly recognized need, the General Assembly in December 1950 extended the life of UNICEF for three years. After 1950, there was a tangible shift in its emphasis from emergency aid to long term programmes. This was done to improve the health and nutrition of children in the underdeveloped countries.

By Resolution 802 (VIII) of October 6, 1953, the General Assembly placed UNICEF on a permanent footing. The General Assembly also charged it with giving assistance to developing countries, in the development of permanent child health and welfare services. At the same time, the General Assembly changed its name from the "United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund" to the "United Nations Children's Fund." Despite this change in the name, the old abbreviation 'UNICEF' was retained because the agency had acquired world-wide fame for its work under that symbol.

1. World Mark Encyclopaedia of the Nations, p. 91.
In recognition of the great humanitarian services, rendered by it, the UNICEF was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1965. On presenting the prize, members of the Nobel Committee said, "The most important thing... is the great step forward in the idea of international cooperation that, UNICEF represents... UNICEF is forging a link of solidarity between the rich and poor countries... Feeling is growing everywhere... that we are in reality one family in the world... To create a peaceful world, we must begin with the children."

PURPOSES

The main objective of UNICEF is to provide assistance to countries in meeting the urgent needs of their children. Despite differences in culture, religion, and political belief, UNICEF reflects a universal concern with the future of children. In each and every country there are numerous individuals, private citizens, government personnel, and those in voluntary agencies and organizations who wish to bring about an improvement in the lot of children. The goal of the UNICEF is to encourage and stimulate their efforts through international aid. UNICEF provides aid only at the

1. UNICEF: What it is... how it works for a better world for children (UNICEF, 1971), p. 3.
request of governments. Its aid is given without regard to race, creed, nationality, status or political belief. Nowadays UNICEF is the world’s largest international agency devoted to the welfare of children.

ORGANIZATION

UNICEF is a part of the United Nations; but it has a semi-autonomous status. It is governed by a 30-nation Executive Board. The members of the Board are elected for a term of three years by the Economic and Social Council. The Executive Board meets regularly to set policy, consider applications for aid, allocate aid, evaluate results, and establish the annual administrative budget of the fund. The actual day-to-day working of the UNICEF is the responsibility of the Executive Director, who is appointed by the Secretary-General of the UN in consultation with the Executive Board.

UNICEF has a staff of approximately 760 persons at its New York office and in some 32 regional and field offices throughout the world.

FINANCES

UNICEF is a part of the United Nations but it is not financed through the regular United Nations Budget. UNICEF

has to depend entirely on voluntary contributions from governments, private organizations, and individuals. Artists and writers give their services free and everyone who buys a UNICEF card helps a child somewhere. UNICEF greeting cards are designed by outstanding contemporary artists. The world wide sale of these cards is a unique method of raising money for programmes benefiting children. The number of Governments contributing to UNICEF increased from 30 in 1950 to 124 in 1970.

ACTIVITIES

Since its inception, UNICEF has played a significant role in providing assistance to the developing countries in child development. In 1946, UNICEF was created only to offer emergency aid but now it emphasizes long range planning. UNICEF has broadened and reoriented its work during its existence. Instead of concentrating its activities in the war-devastated countries, its assistance is now provided mainly for developing countries. Although UNICEF is still supplying relief in emergency situations arising out of natural and man-made disasters its objective is now to make

a major contribution to the economic and social development of the developing countries. UNICEF encourages and assists governments in their efforts to undertake long-term and far-reaching programmes benefiting children and youth.

Major types of programmes of UNICEF include basic maternal and child health services, nutrition projects, disease control, family and child welfare, and certain disaster aid. UNICEF's assistance is provided to countries only at the request of their governments. At present its efforts are directed towards assisting programmes for children in over 120 underdeveloped countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean area. A large part of UNICEF aid takes the form of providing equipment and supplies, for example, health centre equipment, drugs, well-drilling rigs, school garden supplies and equipment for the production of textbooks.

The UNICEF works in close co-operation with WHO, FAO, UNESCO and the ILO. Through the co-operative use of their resources, the UNICEF and the technical agencies can render effective assistance that none of them could offer alone. Thus duplication and fragmentation of effort are avoided.

1. Basic Maternal & Child Health Services

Every type of aid provided by UNICEF has as its purpose the improvement of maternal and child welfare. In rural areas, where 80% of all children live, the combined effect of ignorance, lack of medical attention, and unsanitary living conditions results in sickness; only a few mothers get competent help in child birth.

UNICEF encourages the development of networks of maternal and child health services through a variety of forms of assistance, and with the close technical cooperation of the WHO.

Training in health education is also being stressed by UNICEF, because an important function of maternal and child health centres should be to provide education, especially to mothers.

For training in the field of maternal and child care, UNICEF provides training equipment for schools, hospitals, and centres, where doctors, public health nurses, midwives, health visitors and auxiliary workers are trained. Under certain conditions, UNICEF provides stipends for trainees.

2. World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations, p. 94.
By the end of 1970, UNICEF has provided equipment and supplies for maternal and child health centres in 122 countries and training stipends for over 150,000 health workers ranging from village midwives to pediatric specialists. By the end of 1970, about 63,000 rural and urban health centres and about 2,000 training institutions have been assisted.

UNICEF has also provided basic technical equipment, vehicles, and supplies to a large number of maternal and child health centres.

UNICEF also provides assistance to family planning programmes in countries where such aid is requested by the Governments. Since 1967 up to the end of 1971, 23 governments with national policies for family planning and basic health have requested and received UNICEF's assistance. Since the decision by the board in 1967 that UNICEF should support family planning aspects of maternal and child health services, UNICEF aid for family planning had taken the same form as that given for health services generally, i.e., transport for family planning workers, stipends for special training of nurses and midwives etc.

2. Ibid.
UNICEF is deeply concerned with the problem of environmental sanitation. UNICEF was helping environmental sanitation projects in 54 countries in 1966. It has provided assistance in the improvement of village water supplies, furnishing piping, pumps, drilling equipment and the like; community health education, furnishing education materials and stipends for training of experts in the field of sanitation.

UNICEF has provided only a limited amount of aid to projects dealing with services for handicapped children and premature infants. It has mainly contributed in reducing the incidence of crippling diseases and the number of premature births through its basic health, disease control, and nutrition programmes. Seven countries received assistance from UNICEF - assisted projects in 1966 for the care and rehabilitation of physically handicapped children. For physically handicapped children, UNICEF has provided modern treatment and therapy equipment.

2. Nutrition Projects

One of the UNICEF's major concerns is the serious problem of malnutrition and dietary deficiencies as it affects children, particularly of pre-school age.

Children need nutritious food for their physical development. But still the majority of children in under-developed countries are hungry. They consume food that gives little protein. They follow faulty food customs stemming from ignorance or superstition.

One of the most serious problems is protein deficiency in the diet of children during the pre-school years. It has been estimated that in many countries as many as 70% of the children under 5 years of age are malnourished. They have no chance of developing their full potential. It was found by UNICEF that the developing countries are eager for aid in improving the nutritional conditions of their children. UNICEF, in cooperation with FAO and WHO has helped them develop their own nutrition services and resources for the benefit of children.

In 1969, it was noted by the Executive Board of UNICEF that child malnutrition in most developing countries is more serious than already realized. For rural areas, it was considered best to concentrate on the applied nutrition programmes (school, community and family gardens, village fish-ponds, small animal raising schemes, nutrition education

and food preservation). For urban areas, efforts were to be continued to introduce production of protein-rich weaning foods from the processing of cereals combined with readily available crops such as soy-beans, ground-nuts.

But at its 1971 session, the Board expressed concern at the relatively low level of commitments for child nutrition in view of the adverse effects of malnutrition. It was felt that in part this reflected the slow recognition by some Governments that child malnutrition could be a serious deterrent to national development. The Board discussed the need for the establishment of national food and nutrition policies, of which UNICEF-assisted programmes could be an integral part. In 1971, aid in this field was given to some 3,000 school and community gardens, nutrition centres and demonstration areas; to 300 institutions responsible for the production of such items as seeds and fish; and to 180 training schools.

In order to improve the nutrition of children, UNICEF aid is being given to 4 types of programmes:


(a) **Milk Conservation & Distribution** — By the end of 1970, UNICEF had distributed 765 million pounds of milk powder to maternal and child health centres, first in post-war Europe and, later, throughout the developing countries. It was done as part of its programme to combat hunger and malnutrition. Nowadays, UNICEF is concentrating almost all of its efforts in the field of nutrition on long-term projects to increase local production and consumption of nutritious foods.

UNICEF had helped to equip 214 milk and dairy plants and 16 related institutions by the end of 1970. With the assistance of FAO - recruited experts, UNICEF had also helped the countries where these plants were located. It assisted in strengthening their milk production, collection, and distribution services.

(b) **Applied nutrition** — In recent years, UNICEF is concentrating on 'applied nutrition projects' to stimulate greater production and use of eggs, fish, garden vegetables, and other nutritious products at the village and community level. Through UNICEF - aided 'applied nutrition programmes', 74 countries have been helped to improve the diets of rural families by the end of 1970. UNICEF provides tools and seeds

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1. UNICEF - Compendium, p. 45.
for school and community gardens, nets and other equipment for village fishponds; incubators, brooders, and the like for poultry raising. The primary objective of all these applied nutrition schemes is to teach people the importance of high-protein and other protective foods in their children's diet. These projects also assure the people that they themselves can produce these foods.

(c) **New High-Protein Foods** — After recognizing that it is difficult to expand the production of milk in many tropical and sub-tropical areas, in 1956 UNICEF in cooperation with FAO and WHO decided to undertake the development of low-cost children's foods based on such products as soy, cottonseed, and fish flours. UNICEF had equipped two peanut flour plants in India and a fish flour plant in Chile.

In the field of new high-protein foods, the aim of UNICEF is to alleviate malnutrition among the children of poorer urban families. These children have to choose their foods from among the cheaper products available in shops and markets.

(d) Nutrition Education & related activities

In many of the economically underdeveloped countries of the world, more than half of the population is poor. These people can be helped by nutrition education and related practical activities at the village level. Assistance to such type of projects was first approved in 1957. These projects may form part of a national programme of Community Development, rural health services, or primary education.

3. Mass Disease Control Campaigns

Working in close cooperation with WHO, the UNICEF decided to struggle against those diseases which have a high incidence among children. By 1950, it had been realized that many of the mass diseases that killed and crippled millions of children in the developing countries could be controlled. In most of the UNICEF aided countries, mass campaigns to eradicate the endemic diseases affecting children are a necessary pre-requisite to any effective maternal and child welfare programme.

WHO provides technical advice and international experts to the developing countries. UNICEF furnished the

material support: insecticides, sprayers, laboratory equipment and jeeps for the malaria control campaigns. It has also provided drugs, vaccines, clinical supplies, and health education materials for campaigns against other diseases.

Since 1955, the anti-Malaria Campaign has been one of the largest single items in UNICEF's expenditures. In 1955 the Executive Board decided to join with WHO in a large-scale crash programme to help countries eradicate malaria as early as possible. From 1957 to 1966, UNICEF provided more than $60 million for insecticides, vehicles, sprayers, and drugs for malaria eradication campaigns in about 35 countries. By the end of 1966, WHO was in a position to report that more than half of the population of originally malarious areas of the world had been freed from the risk of endemic malaria. At its March 1969 session, the UNICEF - WHO Joint Committee made a review of the situation in malaria eradication. After reviewing the situation, the Committee made certain recommendations in 1970 as to future UNICEF participation in anti-malaria activities. These were approved by the UNICEF Executive Board. The recommendations provided that the status of each anti-malaria Campaign

was to undergo a serious and realistic appraisal, not only of the technical aspects but also of administrative, operational and financial factors, and that UNICEF was to be associated with these reviews. In 1971, nearly 42 million children were protected against malaria in 19 countries where UNICEF aid has been provided.

Tuberculosis, despite important advances in combating it, remains one of the major causes of death and suffering in the world. By the end of 1970, UNICEF-aided campaigns had vaccinated nearly 360 million children against tuberculosis. UNICEF provides vaccine, drugs and vehicles in its struggle against tuberculosis, while WHO provides technical support. Over 41 million children were given BCG Vaccination against tuberculosis in 1971.

Yaws is a common disease in the rural areas of the tropics. It covers the body with open sores. By the end of 1970, UNICEF had treated over 23 million children for yaws.

Trachoma and related eye diseases are among the main causes of blindness in the world. By the end of 1970, UNICEF-aided campaigns had treated over 43 million for trachoma and conjunctivitis.

4. Education & Social Welfare

In the underdeveloped areas of the world as a whole, only one-half of the children of primary school age are in school. The main obstacles to the expansion of the educational system in most of the developing countries are a limited capacity for teacher training, a shortage of buildings and equipment, and a shortage of texts and other teaching materials. UNICEF's assistance has been concentrated on teacher-training by special courses and seminars, in the extension of primary and secondary education and in the provision of books and equipment. Despite all this only a small proportion of children in the developing countries can complete secondary school education. By the end of 1967, over 14,000 schools and teacher training institutions had received UNICEF equipment and some 61,700 teachers, education auxiliary workers and administrative and supervisory staff had been trained with UNICEF stipends.

All UNICEF-assisted programmes in the field of education are being carried out with the cooperation of UNESCO. In 1971, 13,000 teacher-training institutions, 10,000 primary schools and 2,500 secondary schools received UNICEF equipment and supplies.

In the field of social welfare, UNICEF assists training projects for family and child welfare workers at all levels, from professional supervisors down to village volunteers. As part of a broader community development programme, to teach mothers and young women better ways of raising children, women's clubs have been organized in some countries.

5. Training

Shortage of trained personnel is one of the greatest handicaps to the development of less developed countries. UNICEF attaches great importance to national training programmes and provides flexible and diversified assistance to meet the needs of individual countries. UNICEF provides technical equipment and supplies teaching materials, educational aids and books. To help create and expand national training schemes, UNICEF has provided a substantial portion of its aid. This has taken the form of audio-visual teaching aids, support for the production and preparation of teaching materials, transport to enable students to have field practice training etc. By the end of 1967, a total of over


325,000 persons had received orientation or training with the help of UNICRF stipends. During 1971, more than 170,000 persons received training with UNICRF stipends.

6. Emergency Aid

While concentrating upon long-term programmes for the achievement of its wide range of objectives, UNICRF also helps to meet the needs of children arising out of emergency situations such as wars, earthquakes, cyclones, floods and other disasters.

In spite of the fact that the bulk of its assistance was devoted to the support of long-range development activities, UNICRF continued to provide significant amounts of aid in emergencies. UNICRF's assistance in this field has been limited to one or two essentials such as blankets and clothing, rice, pulses, vitamins and medical supplies, anti-epidemic drugs and soap.

From 1947 to 1966, a little over a 100 million had been allocated by UNICEF to emergency aid. In the first four years, the greater part of this amount was used to help, feed and cloth the children of 16 war-devastated European Countries.

At its 1967 session, the Executive Board of UNICEF reaffirmed its belief that the bulk of the resources of UNICEF should be devoted to long-range programmes. At the same time, the responsibility of UNICEF to be alert and responsive to the need for emergency aid was recognized by the Executive Board. There were two major calls for emergency aid in 1967 - from India and from the Middle East. UNICEF made a special allocation of $ 14 million to India to help the drought stricken areas of Bihar and U.P. This assistance included providing high-protein food supplements, drugs and vitamins and well-digging equipment to help overcome the acute shortage of drinking water.

Following the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East, the UNICEF made a special emergency allocation of about $ 500,000. This amount was allocated primarily to provide blankets, medical supplies and some food for mothers and children.

During 1968, UNICEF provided emergency aid to rehabilitate health units and schools following an earthquake in Colombia; to mothers and children displaced by the hostilities in the Middle East; and to mothers and children in the Republic of Vietnam. In 1970, UNICEF rushed emergency aid to children of Jordan, Nigeria, Peru and Pakistan.

In recent years, one of the major objectives of UNICEF has been to encourage countries to integrate programmes for children and youth into their long-range economic and social development plans. In the spring of 1964, an international round table on "Planning for Children and Youth in National Development" was held under UNICEF auspices in Bellagio, Italy. In November 1965, key officials from 25 Latin American countries met in Santiago, Chile, to examine the situation confronting their children and to study how their needs could be met as part of a genuine "human resource development" programme.

In March 1966, representatives of 24 Asian Countries met in Bangkok for a similar conference.

In addition to these conferences, UNICEF has allocated funds for the training and orientation of planners and for country planning and project preparation.

The UNICEF celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1971. At its annual session, held from 13 to 29 April 1971 in Geneva, Switzerland, the Executive Board reviewed three main phases since the evolution of UNICEF upto the end of 1971: the European Phase, during which the Fund's resources were mainly devoted to meeting post-war emergency needs of children for food and clothing; the shift to the developing countries in the 1950s, with emphasis on programmes of long-range benefit to children; and the movement during the 1960s to aid children as an integral part of overall development efforts.

Today, in active partnership with governments, UNICEF is helping to lift millions of children out of the shadows of hunger, disease and ignorance still threatening them. Growing co-operation between nations makes it possible for UNICEF to work across national and regional boundaries, helping children to a better life through integrated, co-ordinated, and inter-related planning.