

CF/HST/1985-066/Rev.01

TO: Mr. Jack Charnow

**ASIaweek**

DATE: 15 May 1989

FROM: Wah Wong

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Hi! Hope the April Board went well.

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This is just a quick note to let you know that Vivian and I will be visiting New York for a couple of days next month on a personal trip! She's been baby-sitting our grandson in Toronto while the little kid's mother is back at work for 3 months, finishing her articling for the Bar -- and I thought that, as a reward, and since New York is just a hop-skip-and-jump from Toronto (and since she ASKED to go), I may as well take her to the Big Apple!

Yep -- I've been "batching" it for quite a while, but when I get tired of Kraft Dinner and instant Noodles and stuff like that, I simply catch a supersaver flight to Toronto, fill up on home cooking, and then come back to my Asiaweek correspondence.... I'm also handling a monthly magazine on China, published in Hong Kong, which keeps me hopping a bit.

The BIG news is that I've been nominated to serve on the national UNICEF Board of Directors -- will tell you all about it in June! Will you be in the office on Thurs. June 8 or Fri. June 9? If not, give me a quick call in Toronto (416) 479-6897 -- I'll be there from May 23!!

*(Canadian)*  
Warmest regards  
Wah Wong

(11p)

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UNICEF History Project  
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UNICEF and Israel

A Brief Chronicle of Cooperation, 1948 - 1985\*

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\* Prepared by Michel Iskander for the UNICEF History Project. An account of UNICEF aid in the Middle East for Palestinian children and mothers living in occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza is included in UNICEF in the Middle East and North Africa: by Michel Iskander (UNICEF History Series Monograph XII, 1989).

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### First request for aid

UNICEF entry into the Middle East came about in the aftermath of the dramatic events resulting from the proposed partition of Palestine by the United Nations, Arab opposition, the subsequent war and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Hostilities resulted in many thousands of Palestinian Arabs becoming refugees, living in difficult circumstances, in makeshift shelters, with uncertain food supplies and no medical facilities. In the meantime, the newly created State, under a Provisional Government, was struggling to establish itself and to meet the basic needs of its population as well as those of tens of thousands of new immigrants, mainly from the Displaced persons' Camps in Europe and from Middle Eastern countries.

From 1948 to 1954 UNICEF's contribution to a child feeding programme, maternal and child health (MCH) and BCG anti-tuberculosis vaccination campaign in Israel totaled about \$700,000; the feeding component was about \$393,000, reaching some 200,000 children.

### Child feeding

The first UNICEF assistance provided to Israel was in response to a letter submitted by a representative of the Provisional Government in August 1948 to UNICEF's Executive Board. The letter requested that relief measures then being considered for the Palestinian Arab refugees be extended to apply to children and mothers within Israel. The children and mothers concerned were both Jewish and Arab. The letter estimated those in need at 12,000 children and 8,000 women.

With the approval of this request, and subsequent extensions, UNICEF provided milk, margarine, sugar and rice that eventually reached 50,000 children and 4,000 infants. The first shipments of food were quickly dispatched to both sides in the conflict after arriving in Beirut and Haifa in September 1948.

In October 1949 approval was given to an allocation of \$250,000 for a six month feeding programme in Israel to cover the first half of 1950. The programme was to include infants age 0 to one-year in infant welfare centres, where whole milk was to be provided; pre-school age children in nurseries; and school lunches to primary school age children. The first of these categories was favored because it assisted the Israeli government in expanding its network of infant welfare centres for both Jewish and Arab children. The school lunch programme was supported because it was to be especially helpful to Arabs and North African Jewish children who were to become subject to compulsory school attendance for the first time in 1950.

Related to this feeding programme was the interest expressed by the Israeli Government indicating its preference to receive cows for the equivalent dollar value of the powdered milk provided by UNICEF. The Government offered, in this case, to provide the necessary transport of these cows to Israel, and the equivalent quantity of the imported UNICEF milk in the child feeding programme. While the Executive Director favored this approach because its contribution to the long-term improvement in the country's milk supplies, pragmatic factors intervened. Later, in the 1960s, as set forth below, UNICEF began assisting Israel in a milk conservation programme.

### Leather for shoes

The desperate need for children's clothing in that early period was recognized when UNICEF made a contribution of leather supplies worth \$25,000, enough for over 33,000 pairs of children's shoes to be made in Israel.

### Basic health/MCH

Starting in 1951 UNICEF assisted Israel in the development of its plans for the extension of a network of MCH centres, which by 1954 numbered 270. UNICEF provided standard equipment and expendable supplies, such as fish-liver oil capsules and soap, to meet the needs of 100 centres. Additionally, equipment and supplies were provided for a ten-bed maternity ward, to serve an Arab township and the surrounding district.

### Helping polio victims

When poliomyelitis assumed epidemic proportions in 1950 and again in 1951-1952, its most serious effect was on children under five years of age. In response, UNICEF airlifted two iron lungs in May 1950 to help the government in this emergency. Crippling and other physical disabilities were often the unfortunate outcome of polio. A wing in the government Rehabilitation Centre at Sarafand was devoted to treatment and rehabilitation of polio victims. UNICEF helped by supplying equipment worth about \$20,000 to the wing.

### Tuberculosis prevention

An anti-tuberculosis testing and BCG vaccination campaign was carried out in Israel in 1949 and 1952 with active UNICEF assistance given through the International Tuberculosis Campaign. During that period 365,000 young persons were tested and 209,000 were vaccinated. The cost to UNICEF was about \$86,000. The government subsequently continued the BCG vaccinations on its own, as part of its public health services.

### Milk conservation

In the early days of the State of Israel, it was generally believed that the country could not develop a viable dairy industry due to shortage of pasture land and the tropical climate. However, the government persisted in developing cowherds modernizing and expanding the industry and, by the early sixties, six Israeli dairies were supplying almost all of the country's requirements for safe pasteurized or sterilized milk in bottles. UNICEF played an important role in this development beginning in 1952 when it made a first allocation to Israel in this field. Three dairies in Tel Aviv, and one each in Haifa and Jerusalem, received key imported equipment from UNICEF, including homogenizers and bottle-washers, as well as technical advice on pasteurization and sterilisation. An existing glassworks in Haifa was given molds by UNICEF enabling it to make bottles. A plant in Kfar Shmaryahu received sterilisation equipment to provide safe, cheap milk, requiring no refrigeration, to families settling in new towns and cities in the Negev.

By April 1960 it was reported that 130,000 children were receiving daily school meals, including milk produced in these dairy plants. Up to that year UNICEF's allocations to milk conservation activities in Israel amounted to \$738,000.

Israel's experience in this field was shared with countries with similar climatic and grazing conditions. In 1963, with help from UNICEF, it hosted an international dairy training course attended by 15 participants from Ethiopia, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Nigeria, Spain, Tanzania, and Turkey.

#### Nutrition: research and education

Commencing in 1959 UNICEF was cooperating with Israeli scientists, nutritionists and home economists in carrying programmes of research, nutrition education and applied nutrition. Aid was provided for the conduct of a nutrition survey during the summer of 1959 to learn about the food habits and nutritional deficiencies of immigrants residing in rural areas, and the nutritional problems among certain rural groups. The research was carried out among 600 families, and in November of that year the medical part of the survey was to prove of great value in establishing food and nutrition policies and guidelines for future years.

Under this same project the College of Nutrition and Home Economics was helped to strengthen its training work in home economics and to augment school gardening activities. The latter was an important tool in nutrition education as well as for supplementary production of foods. UNICEF aid included raw materials, transport, equipment and training grants.

#### Special health problems

##### Premature infant care

At the request of the government, in 1955 UNICEF provided equipment for the establishment of three premature infant care units and these were installed in maternity wards in Tel Aviv and Haifa hospitals. The projects were completed 1957-59.

##### Mycosis

Another specialized problem facing the health authorities was that of mycosis (ringworm) which particularly affected children. Work towards controlling this fungal infectious disease was begun in 1963 through the use of a newly developed fungal antibiotic known as grisofulvin. Of some 30,000 children examined each month, from 10-15 per cent of those of pre-school age and about 2 per cent of those of school age were found to be infected. On average, 750 new cases were treated each month. Case finding, home visiting, treatment and follow up was the responsibility of the six district health offices and 9 sub-offices, each under the supervision of a medical officer. The medication grisofulvin was administered orally for 60 days and proved the efficacy of this oral drug, replacing the former cumbersome treatment with ointments. UNICEF provided laboratory equipment and half of the estimated requirements of the drug for the three-year campaign, at the end of which the disease was considered under control, and no longer represented a public health problem. UNICEF aid in this field amounted to \$62,400.

### Social welfare services

Social welfare services comprised another area of extensive cooperation between UNICEF and Israel. The rapid expansion of child welfare service has attracted workers and supervisors to this field with varying backgrounds, training and experience. To help develop common standards and procedures among these workers a series of training courses was organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare between 1962 and 1964. Each course began with a 2-day residential seminar, followed by closely supervised field work to be concluded later on by a three week residential seminar. By the end of 1964 some 65 workers from children's institutions and day care centres were trained. New courses were to follow in 1965.

Training was provided by professional staffs from Hebrew University, the Ministries of Social Welfare, Health and Labour. UNICEF assistance included training and demonstration materials and stipends, as well as vehicles. The United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs provided the services of a family and child welfare advisor. The cost to UNICEF was about \$30,000.

### A historic cooperation

UNICEF's active cooperation with Israel dates back to the year in which the State was established in 1948. As described above, the areas of cooperation were child feeding, maternal and child health, milk conservation and social services and, in addition, on some technical matters benefiting children. Total direct aid by UNICEF up to 1965 is estimated at \$1,700,000.

Israel was also active as a contributor to UNICEF's management and policy development. It was a member of the Fund's Executive Board beginning from 1950 to 1968. For eighteen crucial years in UNICEF's evolution, Israel's representative to the Board, Mrs. Zena Harman held a remarkable leadership position in the Board. She was elected Chairman of the Programme Committee in 1955 and 1956, and again in 1959 and 1962 and 1963. She was first Vice-Chairman of the Board in 1957-1958, and Chairman of the Board in 1964 and 1965. As Board Chairman she led the UNICEF delegation to Oslo in 1965 for the Nobel Prize for Peace and delivered a Nobel Lecture on behalf of UNICEF.

At the 1985 UNICEF Executive Board session the UNICEF Executive Director, Mr. James P. Grant, paid a special tribute to Mrs. Harman for her contribution to the work of UNICEF, both on UNICEF's Executive Board and as the guiding spirit for many years of the Israel UNICEF National Committee (see Annex I).

As is the case with all countries cooperating with UNICEF, Israel has been, since 1949, a regular contributor to UNICEF general resources. Since 1973 Israel has increased its annual contribution to the level of \$50,000.

A landmark was reached when in 1966 the Prime Minister of Israel, Mrs. Golda Meir, informed UNICEF that the country's services for children had reached a sufficiently high standard that it no longer required UNICEF's material assistance. In the same communication she warmly thanked UNICEF for the help it provided in her country since the establishment of the State in 1948.

### Emergency assistance

UNICEF provided emergency assistance from the Executive Director's Emergency Relief Fund in the wake of the 1967 and 1973 wars - in 1967 for food, blankets, clothing, medicines and school materials and in 1973 help to repair and rebuild health centres, schools and kindergartens in war-damaged areas.

### UNICEF-Israel technical cooperation

While assistance from UNICEF was no longer required, cooperation continued at the technical level in projects that have a potential benefit to children not only in Israel but for countries elsewhere.

#### Infant and weaning foods

One of these projects had to do with the development of low-cost weaning and infant foods based on oilseed, such as cotton, soya and sesame. This took place in 1968-1969 in collaboration with the Israel Institute of Technology (the Technion).

#### Day-care and pre-school services

Commencing in 1976 UNICEF provided an initial grant of \$50,000 and subsequent financial assistance for an outreach project in the area of day-care and pre-school services for children of disadvantaged parents, incorporating the child, the home and the community. This innovative programme provided information and materials relevant to Early Childhood services. An essential feature of the programme was the work also undertaken with parents; children were not accepted unless parents participated. The graduates of this post-graduate training programme became supervisors and trainers of the staffs required, the target population being primarily immigrants and refugees from Asian and African countries located in development towns. Arab graduates have initiated new programs and undertaken similar responsibilities in the Arab sector.

#### Other technical cooperation

Other aspects of technical cooperation took place through the work of the Mount Carmel Training Centre in the fields of community development, social services, kindergarten teaching and supervision and the marketing of handicrafts for small-scale enterprises. Scholarships were provided, including by UNICEF, for women from developing countries to participate in seminars and training courses.

### National Committee for UNICEF

The Israel National Committee for UNICEF was founded in Israel in 1969 through the efforts of Mrs. Zena Harman, at the time member of the Knesset. Israel's first ladies, beginning with Mrs. Nina Katzir, followed by Mrs. Ophira Navon and Mrs. Auro Herzog, the wife of the incumbent President, served as Honorary Presidents of the National Committee. Similar to the efforts of the National Committee for UNICEF in other countries, the Israeli committee carried out an educational programme on the needs of children in developing countries. Its fund-raising activities for support of UNICEF included the sale of UNICEF greeting cards.

Mrs. Navon was the Patron of the International Year of the Child (IYC) activities in Israel in 1979, carried out by the Israel IYC Commission, chaired by Mrs. Harman also in her capacity as chairperson of the Israel National Committee for UNICEF which was closely involved in this.

In 1980 the Committee was instrumental in raising a total of US\$1.3 million by a TV telethon and other public efforts for the benefit of Kampuchean refugees; of this amount \$250,000 was made available equally to UNICEF and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), for refugee children in Thailand.



Annex I

Tribute to Mrs. Zena Harman  
at the 1985 UNICEF Executive Board Session, April 1985

Excerpt from statement by Mr. James P. Grant, UNICEF's Executive Director:

"The warmth and sensitiveness that characterised Zena Harman's work as a member of the Executive Board beginning 1950, as Chairman of the Programme Committee for years and, finally, as twice Chairman of the Board in 1964 and 1965, was modulated by a fine sense not only of what was desirable but also of what was do-able. She led the UNICEF delegation to Oslo for the Nobel Award and delivered UNICEF's acceptable speech. In a divided world, her heart and mind were big enough to seek and find consensus. Her main influence on our programmes was the emphasis she gave, time and time again, to the need for a small and not very affluent organisation such as ours to concentrate on mobilising and developing human resources - by using the impulse of voluntarism which people have towards all children and by investing time and effort on training people in the community to grow their children well. That was why she pressed UNICEF to give high priority to the empowerment of women through knowledge of hygiene, nutrition and environmental sanitation.

"When she ceased being a member of the Board, Zena Harman returned home to become the guiding spirit of the UNICEF National Committee in Israel. It has become a prime source of information about the needs and development possibilities of children in the developing world. It is the work which has stimulated the annual observance of International Children's Day in her country."

Remarks by Mrs. Zena Harman in response to statement by Mr. James P. Grant:

"Mr. Chairman, I would like to say to Jim Grant how very deeply moved I have been, and to let him know, and to let all my friends in UNICEF know, that the rewards of having the opportunity to work with UNICEF have given me far, far more than I have ever been able to invest in the work of UNICEF."

"If there are perhaps two or three areas which have given me the greatest feeling of satisfaction, I would say the first is the knowledge that UNICEF is second to none in fulfilling or striving towards its objectives and its responsibilities in bringing essential and crucial improvements to human well-being, and indeed contributing immensely, I believe, to the very future of mankind."

"The second is the wonderful sense of being part of a large family where all peoples and all nations -- irrespective of their point of departure -- find it possible to transcend their differences and commit themselves to the future in ensuring that conditions for children will increase their opportunity to live and provide them with better prospects for progress and development."

|The third area has been the superb, wonderful, opportunity of knowing the people involved in UNICEF: first of all, working with three Executive Directors, all of whom have been outstanding human beings with great professional and administrative skills, totally dedicated and committed to the purposes of UNICEF. In all three I have found great friendship and great understanding. This has also been true of the members of the Board with whom over the years I have had the privilege to cooperate and work. In a very real sense, they are part of the UNICEF world family, too. It has also been true of UNICEF's staff with their great professional skills, their unusual sense of commitment, their know-how and their knowledge. Added to this is the opportunity I have had of working with National Committees and knowing what a tremendous influence they have had on public opinion in their own countries and in enlisting understanding and resources for UNICEF's work. And that goes too, for the representatives of many non-governmental organisations."

"And finally I would say that there is a certain spirit with which UNICEF is imbued which somehow transcends itself and enables us to give our best in our search for a better life for children and the new generation."

"Thank you so much for having given me this possibility and this opportunity."

Annex II

References

- 1) Letter addressed to the Executive Board of UNICEF by Dr. M. Kahana, Representative in Geneva of the Provisional Government of Israel on 13 August 1948. UNICEF document E/ICEF/74 Annex 2.
- 2) Report of the Executive Director to the Programme Committee, 20 October 1949. E/ICEF/129.
- 3) Recommendation by the Executive Director on additional allocation to Israel, 18 October 1949. E/ICEF/W80.
- 4) UNICEF Compendium, Volume V, 1954-1956.
- 5) UNICEF Compendium, Volume VI, 1955-1957.
- 6) Letter from Mr. A. Halevi, Director Food Division, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, State of Israel to Mr. D. Sabin, Director of Food Conservation Division, UNICEF. 23 April 1964.
- 7) Digest of UNICEF Projects Currently Aided in the Eastern Mediterranean, E/ICEF/400/Add.2, May 1960.
- 8) Digest of UNICEF Projects Currently Aided in the Eastern Mediterranean, E/ICEF/533, 1 November 1965.
- 9) Final Report of the Israel National Commission for IYC, transmitted by Mrs. Zena Harman to Mr. John Grun, 15 June 1980.
- 10) UNICEF's War Relief Contributions to Israel. Memo from Donald Allan, Regional Information Officer, to James McDougal, UNICEF's Regional Director, Eastern Mediterranean Region, 26 March 1974.
- 11) UNICEF in the Middle East and North Africa: A Historical Perspective, by Michel Iskander (UNICEF History series, Monograph II, 1989).