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E.J.R. (Dick) Heyward 1914-2005

Quiet Architect of UNICEF and International Systems

In August, former UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Dick Heyward passed away. A legendary figure in the history of UNICEF, he served the organization from 1949 until long after his retirement in 1981. To a great extent, the story of Heyward is the story of UNICEF itself. In the spirit of sharing that legacy with UNICEF staff, the Office of the Executive Director has kindly supported the production of the following remembrance by UNICEF historian Maggie Black.

As the 60th anniversary commemorations of the end of World War II recently recalled, the inheritance shouldered by the post-war generation was an unparalleled task of reconstruction, in a world still groping for sufficient equilibrium to avoid another global conflagration. E.J.R. (Dick) Heyward was one of the members of that generation who, within the fledgling international institutions then emerging, and in the modesty of the behind-the-scenes settings where he felt most at home, helped shape the framework within which international social, economic and humanitarian issues would subsequently be addressed.

Heyward did this from the position of Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, a post from which he not only masterminded the evolution over 30 years of one of the UN's best-loved and respected institutions, but initiated other inter-UN mechanisms and policy approaches within the international system as a whole. The period in which he occupied this role, 1949 until 1981, saw a fundamental transition of the international social, economic and humanitarian mission, from post-war reconstruction to support for development in the post-colonial world. This was the cause that inspired most of his career, and to which he made an important behind-the-scenes contribution. It is also significant that his longstanding service took place during the most problematic years of superpower rivalry and East-West confrontation, in which the new United Nations system was itself often subjected to extreme stress on grounds of partiality or ineffectiveness. He brought to his multi-faceted task a towering intellectual strength, a genius for administration, and – coupled with an outwardly shy and retiring personality – a bulldog tenacity which made him one of the outstanding international civil servants of the past 60 years. It was UNICEF's great fortune that he chose to make his contribution to the international system and the development cause within the context of its own mission for children.



UNICEF/HQ60-0010/photographer unknown

Early influences

Born in Tasmania, Australia, in 1914, Heyward graduated from the University of Tasmania in 1935, and later took a Masters in economics at the London School of Economics. Exposure to current economic theory in the era when the ideas of such figures as Gramsci and Keynes were in the ascendant had a lasting influence on his thinking. He was European in outlook and felt an instinctive

solidarity with people in need. His personal convictions, however strongly held, were never allowed to interfere with the requirements of complex political navigation, at which he excelled.

Heyward arrived in New York in 1947 as first secretary to the Australian Mission to the UN at a time when the spirit of post-war internationalism was threatened by the sharpening East-West divide. As part of his duties, he became Australia's representative on UNICEF's Executive Board only a few months after it had come into existence. The impartial post-war assistance programme under the auspices of the United Nations – UNRRA – had been wound up at US insistence. This duly made way for the US Marshall Plan for European reconstruction which was only available to countries in the American sphere of influence. In December 1946, the residues of UNRRA were handed over to a temporary body, the UN 'ICEF', or international children's emergency fund. This came about mainly through the diplomacy of Dr. Ludwik Rajchman, Poland's UN delegate, who saw the creation of a children's fund as a way of avoiding a total collapse of aid under international auspices to the countries of Eastern Europe. The organization's genesis was therefore that 'children are above the political divide'; but like other principles of humanitarian neutrality, this was then far from established. It was a principle which, from the start, Heyward regularly raised his voice to defend. One of his early interventions secured a proportion of

the aid voted for relief to victims of the Chinese civil war for distribution on the Communist side.

The concept that assistance for children should be kept detached from political pressures and affiliations was very difficult to uphold in the climate of the times – or at any time, it was later to transpire. Impartiality in providing relief assistance requires political judgment of the highest order and is not the disingenuous, do-nothing stance that NGOs critical of UN fence-sitting were later to suggest. The principle later became central to the architecture of humanitarian response in the international quicksands of the cold war, particularly in civil war situations in Africa and in the long imbroglio in Indo-China.

When the 'ICEF' came into being, its life was supposed to be brief. At that time, humanitarian aid was usually held to consist purely of short-term emergency relief, and as countries in Eastern Europe gradually withdrew from the UN orbit, local offices closed. But Rajchman, in his capacity as first Chairman of UNICEF's Board, had ambitions for UNICEF. He had been a vital and prominent force in international public health between the world wars, but in 1946 had been passed over as head of the new WHO. Now he set out to deploy UNICEF's resources in the area of expertise in which he had excellent contacts and experience, and where post-war needs were indisputable: child health. He argued forcefully for UNICEF support to the International Tuberculosis Campaign (ITC), then starting up under Red Cross auspices in Scandinavia. This was the first mass child vaccination campaign of its kind and was not initially approved by WHO, although in time it gained WHO's backing for expansion around the world. Rajchman was an extraordinary, brilliant and open-minded figure, who contrived for his 'ICEF' a more generous interpretation of its 'child health purposes' mission than anyone else would have dared. Due to Rajchman, UNICEF assumed early on the attributes of a cuckoo in the UN nest: an organization which could be proactive and inventive, squeezing under the diplomatic wire in the name of purely humanitarian endeavour. However, Rajchman's Polish nationality and internationalist background attracted the attention of the US communist witch-hunt in the early 50s, and he was forced to retire.

Dick Heyward's admiration for Rajchman, and Rajchman's mentorship of Heyward, had a great deal to do with the latter's acceptance of the invitation from Maurice Pate, UNICEF's Executive Director, to join him as a Deputy Executive Director in April 1949. Certainly, the longer-term role carved out for UNICEF in programmes for child health – looked at askance if not actually contested by WHO – was constructed first by Rajchman and then pursued by Heyward.

UNICEF's threatened demise

A key area of UNICEF activity in the late 40s was to initiate programmes in Asia and other parts of the world in an attempt to internationalize its programme of assistance beyond Europe. This and support for more lasting types of intervention than relief supplies – such as the ITC, and investments in penicillin plants and milk pasteurization in Europe and Asia – were building blocks for a more permanent UNICEF mission.

However, as the post-war emergency receded, the move to

end the temporary life of 'ICEF' gathered force. The closure of the children's fund was keenly supported by the US on the ideological grounds that relief should be short-term, and by the UN's specialized agencies – especially by WHO which saw this humanitarian upstart as competing on its turf. Even Maurice Pate, a dedicated and immensely respected humanitarian, was dubious about any extension of its career. Heyward, together with Jack Charnow, secretary to the Executive Board, was largely responsible for enabling the alternative case to be presented in UN councils: that there were children in need all over the world, for whom the existence of a UN fund providing additional mate-

Heyward was always thorough but never unwilling to make bold decisions. He was a resolute visitor to the field.

rial assistance to that of the technically-oriented specialized UN agencies was justified. In spite of the determined opposition of US delegate Eleanor Roosevelt, this case was carried in the UN General Assembly. The compromise, that UNICEF's life could be temporarily extended, led seamlessly to its permanent establishment. This was a tribute to Heyward's strategic skills. By alliance-building with delegates from newly independent Asian countries, and the exploration of all conceivable sources of funds, he and Charnow engineered the organization's survival. Moreover, this was done in such a way that the question of UNICEF's independent status and mandate was then shelved for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, Heyward had long retired when a similar effort became necessary in the 1990s. The question of UNICEF's independent survival has not been as definitively closed during recent discussions on UN reform.

During the 1950s, the landmark programmes in which UNICEF was involved – the international TB campaign, the distribution of PL480 milk surplus in child feeding programmes in many parts of the world, initiatives to address kwashiorkor in Africa, the eradication of yaws, the attempt (and eventual failure) to eradicate malaria – all carried Heyward's imprimatur. Pate depended heavily on Heyward as far as policy matters were concerned. Heyward was always thorough but never unwilling to make bold decisions: compared to most public servants he was pioneering and radical. He took a particular interest in policy areas which needed extra application, and was a resolute visitor to the field: he sought actual exposure to problems on the ground, without consideration for personal comfort or the red carpet treatment many senior UN officials expect. He always took an interest in staff, particularly in local staff and in those in remote and less comfortable postings, and was later instrumental in inventing a special UN professional category of 'national officers'. In this way, the expertise of professionals in the countries in which UNICEF operated could be recognized, developed and

brought into a system which was otherwise set up on foreign or colonial service lines: executive positions in field and headquarters offices in other UN bodies were confined to the international cadre, with local staff only allowed to occupy clerical and support functions. Heyward was a modernizer and an equalizer, keen to harness local perspectives and expertise. He saw that an international organization which failed to do this was not only patronizing and neo-colonial, but would be over-dependent on decisions made too far from local realities and thus less effective in the field.

This was only one of the ways in which he broke the mould of a centralized and heavily bureaucratized international system, and helped to contrive for UNICEF a more decentralized and field-based structure. Heyward deployed the freedom conferred on UNICEF by its looser and relatively lowly status within the UN system to its advantage. He managed to keep it away from common-system straitjackets – often depicted as instruments of inter-organizational coordination and cost-saving, but sometimes more accurately consisting of hidden methods of control by other UN bodies or donor governments with vested interests. Heyward kept his focus – despite all the distractions of fund-raising, politicking and navigation on a pressurized international stage – on building the quality and range of UNICEF's programme, and designing an organizational framework to support it right down to the beneficiary groups at the final destination. In this, he was also unusual among leading UN officials, many of whom adopt a quasi-ambassadorial style and restrict their contact-building range to the upper echelons of the national and international bureaucracy. But he was fortunate in that the two Executive Directors under whom he served for their entire tenure, Maurice Pate and Henry Labouisse, (and also James Grant whom he served for a transitional period), were expert at the 'public face' leadership role and were happy to entrust Heyward with backroom mastery of the organizational machine.

A kaleidoscope of expertise

In the very early days, the small staff cadre required that UNICEF personnel have a breadth of expertise. But Heyward was exceptional in this context too. His range was kaleidoscopic, from fund-raising ventures such as the enormously successful UNICEF greeting cards operation, formally established in 1951; to budgeting and financial management; popularization of the UNICEF cause via a network of UNICEF National Committees; staffing and staff development; supplies procurement; and all areas of programme technicality. He devoured information voraciously and kept himself up-to-date across a very wide range of subjects. Although for its first two decades UNICEF was obliged to consult the experts of the specialized UN agencies in matters of health and other child-related areas, Heyward believed in UNICEF having its own knowledge base and programme perspectives. He promoted the links originally established by Rajchman with institutes concerned with the study of childhood, notably with the International Children's Centre in Paris, and its Director, Dr. Robert Debré.

At a later stage, Heyward was the moving force behind

UNICEF's own professional publication, *Assignment Children/Les carnets de l'enfance*. Published out of Geneva between the 1960s and mid-1980s, *Assignment Children* helped to establish children's studies as a sub-set 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. In this Heyward was aided not only by the original intellectual circle based in Paris, but by Herman Stein, a Professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work. Stein gradually developed a longstanding relationship with UNICEF as its informal dean of 'children and development' studies. In time, Heyward's identification of UNICEF with high standards of professionalism and expertise earned it the right to govern its programme independently from the technical say-so of the specialized agencies. This came about informally in the late 1960s; and in 1972, UNICEF was invited for the first time to submit its annual report to the Second Committee of ECOSOC, on Economic and Financial Questions, rather than the Third, on Humanitarian and Social Affairs. This was an important transition in UNICEF's coming-of-age within the UN system.

From the outset, one of Heyward's keenest areas of interest was nutrition. The humanitarian mission to the developing world was initially characterized as that of campaigning against killer diseases and feeding the hungry child, and the latter absorbed as much of his attention as the former. Feeding programmes, mostly using surplus milk and other kinds of nutritional supplement, were the original order of the day. But the quest soon became one of searching for a long-term, more sustainable response than classic soup-kitchen, feeding-line relief. In the 1950s and 60s, malnutrition was seen as a form of epidemic disease. Later experience was to show that hunger and food deficit within communities are products of poverty, and to a lesser extent of ignorance, and are not easily dealt with by programmes whose guiding light is the delivery of health care. But for many years, child malnutrition in Africa and elsewhere was diagnosed as primarily the product of protein deficiency, instead of simply from lack of regular food and feeding. A key solution attempted was the development of enriched protein foodstuffs: a forerunner of today's supposition that genetically modified 'improved' foods can be at the frontline of combating poor nutrition in poor communities. Protein-enriched and other kinds of technologically fortified foods were beyond the means of those who needed to eat better: processed food which had to be purchased was not the answer for people who grew rather than bought what went into their cooking pots. However the fortification of foodstuffs had important applications for emergency situations, and for later efforts to tackle micronutrient deficiency diseases.

Over many years Heyward was at the heart of the discussions on nutrition within the UN and internationally, in a body called the Protein Advisory Group. He was among those who reviewed all the different diagnoses of hunger and malnutrition from both economic and medical perspectives and tried to develop policy responses. In the attempt to shift from strategies which were over-dependent on the donation of surplus

foods and the application of technology for enrichment, Heyward came up with an approach known as 'applied nutrition'. Nutrition education and the mobilization of village communities and households behind vegetable plots, small livestock, and other nutritious family food supply ingredients were more appropriate strategies for rural subsistence farmers and their families. 'Applied nutrition' drew much of its inspiration from the flowering of early community development ideas in the Indian sub-continent during the 1950s and 60s, and from neo-Gandhian and African socialist ideas of self-sufficiency. Heyward helped to introduce these ideas into the international discourse on nutrition, and was later to help articulate similar approaches to primary health care and community-based services. In the late 1970s, he was a key mover behind the transformation of the Protein Advisory Group into the UN's Sub-Committee on Nutrition, and became its first chairman. This top-level inter-organizational body still oversees system-wide nutrition policy. He therefore helped to conceive and originate inter-agency mechanisms to coordinate policy in areas where no one UN agency or organization was responsible, or where more than one might compete, duplicate or overlap. Given the overriding importance of child health in UNICEF's mission, coordination with WHO was extremely important throughout its history, and this was also primarily steered by Heyward. Thus he promoted joint agency cooperation effectively and where it mattered; but although he believed in it strongly, he did not regard coordination as a magic wand, nor forget that, poorly conceived and managed, it can have the effect of centralizing, bureaucratizing and blocking innovative action.

Coming of age in the era of development

At the start of the 1960s, with de-colonization gathering pace and the Cold War reaching its height, came the advent of the development era. In January 1961, President John F. Kennedy went to the UN General Assembly to declare the 1960s the Decade of Development. A new energy had entered international affairs, and although part of the motivation was to prevent newly-independent countries falling into the Soviet orbit, it was also fired by an idealism to end poverty and hunger throughout the world. With the need for 'development' in all its post-colonial guises now beginning to engage the international system, it was important for UNICEF to position itself within the new international social and economic mission. In spite of its activities in longer-term child health and nutrition, the Children's Fund was still primarily regarded as a humanitarian enterprise and disburser of 'milk powder plus' to distressed mothers and children in emergency settings. Although this was a useful image for fund-raising, UNICEF was already a much more substantial player than the image implied: many of its investments in disease reduction and nutrition had important human development implications. But up to this point, its mandate had been confined to health; investment in meeting any non-physical needs of children, notably learning and developmental needs, were not within its scope. If UNICEF was to play a useful role in the search for keys to unlock the development puzzle, that

mandate would have to be broadened.

In 1957, another powerful intellect had joined UNICEF's senior staff: Georges Sicault, previously Director-General of Health Services in Morocco, was appointed Deputy Executive Director for Planning. During the next few years, UNICEF was swept up in a 'powerful ferment of ideas' – as Pate described its internal policy debates. Sicault and Heyward were advancing the theory that UNICEF should address the needs of the 'whole child'. Strange as it may seem, this was revolutionary in its day and highly controversial. It contrasted with the traditional philanthropic idea of dealing only with basic physical needs of food and medical aid, and leaving other well-being considerations alone. The idea of responding to the 'whole child' derived from the more socially conscious – and therefore politically suspect – ideology of all-round community development. Instead of addressing human problems in a compartmentalized way as if people were only the sum of their parts, interlocking social needs could only be met by interlocking responses. Sicault and Heyward took this idea into the realm of programmes for children, setting out the thesis that the interlocking problems affecting children could only be addressed by a mix of complementary ingredients; and that since children are not a separate demographic group, but are intimately dependent on their families and communities, interlocking programmes for children must also interlock with those for families, especially women, and society at large. Endorsement of the 'whole child' as the object of UNICEF assistance would have the effect of lifting the organization out of its humanitarian niche, and enabling it to take on a broader role in economic and social development. Connected claims were also made: that no society could advance economically without investment in children. 'Children are our most precious resource' was the slogan of this line of thinking.

When the proposal that UNICEF should support the intellectual development of children was first advanced in the late 1950s, it was turned down. So during 1960, in an attempt to resolve the question of what direction its mission should take, UNICEF embarked on a worldwide Survey into the Needs of Children. This led to a complete revision of UNICEF's outlook on how to help children. The resulting report set out a case for considering children's needs within national development plans. No longer to be seen as incidental to the grand development scheme, children should be a target of all policies and programmes directed at building up a country's capital. A theory of development was presented in which the satisfaction of needs during the various phases of child- and pre-adulthood mattered deeply. 'Children first' had gained currency in the past 50 years in the context of war and serious disaster, but now a new version of the same motto was being articulated in the context of national development. In the early 1960s when the development era was declared, the concept of development was cast almost exclusively in economic terms – which explains the emphasis on children as a valuable resource, and on education as an important vehicle for progress. In 1964, at a specially convened meeting on 'Children and Youth in National Development' attended by various luminaries in the expanding development

discourse – Jan Tinbergen, Hans Singer, Alfred Sauvy – UNICEF gained authoritative recognition for its perspective.

The claims made by UNICEF on behalf of social expenditures as a critical development ingredient were to gain ground over the next two decades, eventually arriving at the point where attainments in the field of human development – lower child mortality, higher literacy, reduced malnutrition – became recognized along with economic growth as key development indicators. James Grant at the head of UNICEF from 1980-94 was to start the process whereby many of these became set as ‘millennium goals’ within a time-bound framework. Whatever the wisdom of establishing a large number of targets which the international system was in no position independently to deliver, the gradual elevation of social concerns to a higher position on the international agenda has been a significant achievement, whose basis derives from thinking first emerging in the 1960s. Heyward was not the only pioneer of this kind of thinking, but he was one of the pioneers. It is possible that if he and others such as Sicault had made their contributions elsewhere in the system rather than from within UNICEF, solid backing for the human development vision might have emerged earlier than it did: from UNICEF, it was not possible to exert sufficient leverage in the development debate at the time. Whether or not this is the case, from this point onwards UNICEF programmes of cooperation with countries in the developing world began to be re-shaped into a form which was a genuinely visionary response to the new mission. If this programme structure had been emulated more widely elsewhere, international aid organizations and ODA (official development assistance) might have won more plaudits and produced more concrete results than has often been the case.

The important characteristic was that UNICEF programmes would from then on be planned and executed within the framework of national development plans. There were to be no separate UNICEF ‘projects’ (then the pattern of most international and bilateral assistance); instead there would be an agreement with a recipient government that UNICEF would inject small but critical parcels of support of various kinds – supplies, training, outreach, technical advice – into existing government-run services. This enabled UNICEF to take the risk and carry the cost of piloting a new approach – such as applied nutrition or integrated early childhood services – within a permanent framework. Once logistical or technical problems were ironed out and training requirements fulfilled, the approach could be taken up as part of regular national policy and expanded on a wider scale. UNICEF would strategically withdraw while the various components were naturally absorbed by government and its budget; in some cases, the provision of supplies and equipment previously donated by UNICEF would be subsidized and then taken over by local commercial manufacturers. Heyward, in the years before Charles Egger became Deputy Executive Director for Programmes in the late 1960s, was the key inventor of this programme pattern. He

believed that it was vital to build the capacity of local government services and suppliers, not to construct an edifice separate from the local bureaucracy – however deficient it might be – and be forced to close it down after the project span, with the risk of leaving very little of value behind.

Although no programme design can guarantee success, and UNICEF experienced its own share of programme failures down the years, the model had enormous strengths. It required close collaboration with national and local government bodies with mutual benefits; it fostered ‘capacity-building’ and ‘private-public partnerships’ long before either concept had become fashionable in development parlance. It was also geared to reaching out into remoter areas and down through social levels – something Heyward always looked to reinforce – and was sufficiently flexible and broad-ranging to allow the incorporation of partners from all parts of civil society. At their best, UNICEF programme staff did not sit in the capital city overseeing the delivery of supplies to government warehouses or advising on technical matters; they were able to get out into the field, work with their counterparts in government and non-governmental organizations, and really make a difference on the ground. Thus the development of UNICEF operational mandates and programming modes effected during the 1960s enabled it to metamorphose from a humanitarian and welfare organization into a mechanism for human development. Its field structure and programme model is quite unlike that of any other UN organization. If UNICEF was to lose its separate mandate, something with unique programme potential in the UN system would also be lost.

Emergencies and their aftermath

In early 1965, following the sudden death of Maurice Pate, Dick Heyward became Acting Executive Director of UNICEF for a brief interim period until the distinguished US diplomat, Henry Labouisse, could take over. One of Labouisse’s first duties as Executive Director was to receive the Nobel Peace prize on UNICEF’s behalf. Within a short time, UNICEF was plunged into two major international crises. The first was a



At a memorial celebration in September at UNICEF House, Heyward’s wife Elisabeth (centre right) was surrounded by family and friends, including Executive Director Ann M. Veneman (far left) and Eve Curie-Labouisse (second from right and wife of former Executive Director Henry R. Labouisse).

UNICEF/HQ05-1157/Susan Markisz

severe drought in Bihar in 1966-67, the last occasion on which India declared a famine emergency; the second was the Nigerian Civil War, fought from 1967-70. Both had important repercussions in which Heyward played a key role. The Bihar drought led to UNICEF's entry into significant support for village water supplies (and later sanitation), with the initial supply of high-speed, state-of-the-art, drilling rigs for emergency relief, and later into a country-wide borehole and handpump water supply programme. This move was controversial; in 1969 the largest ever grant for this UNICEF programme was opposed in New York and might well not have been made without Heyward's support. The fact that it was approved provided a platform for UNICEF to be taken seriously as a development partner in the Indian sub-continent. Heyward was later to champion this programme at critical moments in its career, and was instrumental in keeping it going under duress; in turn, the programme and one of its products, the India Mark II handpump, turned out to be among the organization's most successful ventures ever. They helped to place UNICEF in the international vanguard of programmes for water supplies and sanitation in poor communities all over the developing world.

The Nigerian Civil War was an emergency of a different kind. This was the first major occasion in the post-war and post-colonial world when the issue of humanitarian neutrality – aid to victims on both sides of a war – had come into prominence. The breakaway Eastern Nigerian region declared an independent status as Biafra, and under siege from federal troops, its population and especially its children began to starve. However, since the UN was bound by the principle of national sovereignty, it could do nothing to provide the citizens of breakaway Biafra with assistance without federal permission; and that permission was very difficult to obtain because it amounted to support for the disintegration of Nigeria. This emergency was the crucible of modern international relief programmes: the heart-wrenching television footage of starving children, the entanglement of aid with the politics of secession in post-colonial Africa, the cut-throat rivalry of humanitarian relief's heroic musketeers and media followers – there were many 'firsts' associated with this emergency. In circumstances of immense difficulty the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and church-based NGOs mounted an aid airlift from islands in the Gulf of Guinea into Biafra, defying the interdict of the federal Nigerian authorities. UNICEF used its historical defence of children as 'above the political divide' to provide assistance to victims both through federal channels and to Biafrans via the Red Cross and NGO airlifts. UNICEF thus became the conduit of aid from the UN system to civil war victims under control of the rebel authorities, thus sidestepping the constraints of the sovereignty principle. Labouisse went to Lagos to help smooth the diplomatic path, while Heyward and a small team at headquarters pursued every source of funds and relief foodstuffs they could think of, hired cargo vessels, and devised plans to deliver 1,000 tons daily for people in the embattled enclave. The effort to steer a course which would allow major participation in 'illegal' airlifts and convoys but keep UNICEF away from any identification with the rebel cause paid off. When the war final-

ly ended in 1970, the federal authorities excluded every aid organization other than UNICEF from ex-Biafra.

The Nigerian balancing act paved the way for UNICEF to provide aid to both North and South Vietnam; and to become the lead UN agency for the major international relief operation for Kampuchea after the Vietnamese defeat of Pol Pot in 1979. This war and famine emergency was very similar to the Nigerian civil war, in that there was a huge media furore fuelled by the NGO community, with large numbers of mothers and children facing starvation under the control of a Vietnam-backed administration unacceptable to the rest of the world – the Heng Samrin regime in Phnom Penh. Here too a UN organization was needed to head up international humanitarian relief both inside Kampuchea and on the Thai border, to which the Khmer Rouge and hundreds of thousands of refugees had fled. In conditions of enormous suspicion from the parties to the conflict, and under intense pressures from inside and outside the country, UNICEF and the International Red Cross managed to uphold the principle of humanitarian neutrality. They also had to handle a logistical nightmare. Once again, working in partnership with the ICRC, UNICEF was able to take on a special role as the UN organization with the tacitly accepted mandate and delivery capacity to operate major relief programmes in circumstances of extreme sensitivity. In backing first Labouisse, and later James Grant throughout the Kampuchean emergency, Heyward again played a crucial administrative role. The UNICEF-led programme for relief ran for two and a half years until the end of 1981; both Executive Directors feared that the heavy burden UNICEF had had to shoulder would detract from other parts of its programme, and potentially damage its reputation for impartiality. In fact, it emerged from the crisis with heightened prestige.

The era of alternatives

Meanwhile, the ongoing development mission for children was also undergoing change. At the end of the Development Decade of the 1960s, an international commission under Lester Pearson, ex-Prime Minister of Canada, found that achievements were far below expectations. Growth rates of five per cent and more had been managed by most developing countries, but the effects of the new wealth on the poorer sections of their populations were minimal. Vast numbers of people still lived in conditions which amounted to a denial of human dignity: the benefits of investment, technology transfer and aid stopped short before they reached them. By the early 1970s, a new climate of thinking was emerging, advocating approaches such as 'growth with redistribution' and 'meeting basic needs' in an attempt to tackle poverty more directly; even the World Bank under Robert McNamara was suggesting that growth targets should be set in terms of human needs for food, health, water, housing, literacy and employment. This change in approach brought to the fore the assistance programmes of certain NGOs and UNICEF, since their mission had always been focused on the poor themselves, rather than on technology transfer or capital investment. In their small-scale way, these bit-players in the drama of development had managed to reach poor people with improvements in their quality of life quite effectively. Meanwhile, a series of crises

and debates engulfed the international system, led by the oil crisis, the growing awareness of environmental 'limits to growth', and a world food crisis precipitated by disastrous harvests in 1974. Economic downturn in the industrialized countries was leading to less sanguine prospects for economic growth elsewhere. For UNICEF, the 'quiet emergency' affecting children around the world was both a challenge and an opportunity.

A number of major policy reviews were undertaken by UNICEF at this time, including surveys on education, on 'meeting basic health needs' (with WHO), and on child nutrition. The findings pointed UNICEF towards another evolution in its thinking. Building on the idea of integrated services for the 'whole child', the new idea was the promotion of 'basic services' at

Heyward put forward the 'basic services' strategy, and then helped broker a breakthrough political commitment to back it up.

community level. These would be services combining health, nutrition, water supplies, literacy and other basic needs which reached into the social perimeter instead of stopping short at the capital city or district headquarters. In order to run these services, people from communities would be trained to be the volunteer cadre of first-line workers; formal services staffed by professional workers would be restructured to provide up-the-line support, tier on tier. Models for this 'basic services' approach had been pioneered by inspired health professionals and educators in various parts of the developing world, as a result of deep frustration with conventional, elitist services as a way of reaching the unreached. These community-based experiments were usually set up by Asian, African or Latin American nationals: theirs was an authentic developing country voice. Their key discovery had been that expanding local people's knowledge, harnessing their energies and inviting them to participate in programmes as actors instead of merely as passive recipients led to impressive and cost-efficient results. Amazing as it now seems, the idea that people in poor communities could help design and execute action for their own development, rather than simply wait in ignorance to have it slapped upon them, was a revelation.

The key mover behind the 'basic services' approach, and architect both of its rationale and its field modalities and characteristics, was Heyward. This strategy, which was presented to the Executive Board in 1975 and more fully elaborated the following year, was to dominate UNICEF's policy during the second half of the 1970s and early 80s. The strategy combined a reduction in per capita service costs to allow wider spread, with the active involvement – the 'participation' – of programme beneficiaries. The 'strategy for basic services' was in effect an extension of alternative approaches to health care that had been under discussion in the WHO/UNICEF Joint Committee on Health Policy since 1972. For some years,

WHO had been proposing to ministries of health in developing countries the adoption of 'basic health services', a minimum standard of medical care, incorporating disease prevention, curative medicine, and maternal and child health (MCH) care. This comprehensive approach, with referral up the line for serious cases to second- and third-tier facilities with senior professionals and specialists, evolved in time into a proposal for radical changes in health care delivery. Preventive public health care and MCH were to be given more emphasis, and sophisticated hospital-based services far less. 'Primary health care' became the new watchword in health system reform. The International Conference on Primary Health Care, held in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan, in 1978, backed by WHO and UNICEF, won international respectability for the 'alternative order in health'. This was not achieved without considerable behind-the-scenes pushing and cajoling by the conference's two masterminds, Heyward and his counterpart at WHO, Tejado de Rivero. The pharmaceutical industry and industrialized world had a hard time swallowing the idea that health care systems should be oriented away from medical high tech and top-down disease campaigns towards basic equipment and drugs. At the same time developing country health ministers needed persuading that they were not being fobbed off with second-class 'barefoot doctor' systems of care. The political commitment won at the Conference was a breakthrough at the time, and the international endorsement of 'health for all by the year 2000' can be seen as a high point in the era of alternative, poverty-centred, social development approaches.

The strategy of 'basic services' to meet 'basic needs', although eclipsed by the reinvigoration of the disease campaign under James Grant a few years after Heyward's retirement, nonetheless passed into common development parlance. The idea of creating ownership and responsibility at the outer edge of service delivery and of engaging communities in their own development process remains operative today. Although the debates surrounding policy and programmes have since moved on, many of their key ingredients – decentralization, participation, integration, maintenance, sustainability – are the familiar 'basic services' questions puzzled over by Heyward and his colleagues at UNICEF headquarters and in the field.

An important swansong

During the mid-1970s, the marketing practices of companies selling infant formula in developing countries became the subject of vociferous protest. Breastfeeding was in decline in many urban areas where women from low socioeconomic groups were increasingly obliged to work, and where back-up systems of child care by experienced family members did not exist. Formula companies had not adjusted their marketing policies to take into account the squalor and poverty in which many potential users of their products lived, and instead were taking advantage of the ignorance of both mothers and health care professionals to promote their products in unethical ways. Maternity wards and paediatricians were being suborned into a birthing and infant care regime entirely inappropriate for the social and economic environment. The promotion of infant

foods in such settings with all its emotive connotations drew attention to the kind of exploitation of the world's poor of which multinational companies were capable. The subject became an international cause célèbre and the campaign a forerunner of others, such as those contesting the practices of transnational agricultural and pharmaceutical companies in the context of patented seeds and anti-retroviral drugs for HIV.

In 1979, WHO and UNICEF held an international conference on infant feeding, to which representatives from governments, UN agencies, the infant food industry, the paediatric profession, voluntary organizations and consumer groups were invited. The content and form of this exercise to arrive at multinational agreement on the ethical marketing of infant formula was designed and steered principally by Heyward. The starting point was the need to support breastfeeding worldwide as the best route to sound infant nutrition, a goal with which even the representatives of industry could not disagree. The range of the meeting was broad enough to avoid stand-off controversy between the main protagonists, and among its recommendations – reached by consensus – was the articulation of an international code for the marketing of infant food products. Although the companies had already modified their marketing practices and established a code of their own, there were still practices involving the provision of 'information' to health and medical workers which caused WHO and UNICEF deep concern.

The draft International Code of Marketing for Breast-milk Substitutes, in which Heyward's was a key drafting hand, was presented to the World Health Assembly in 1981. Among its provisions was a ban on all infant formula advertising and free distribution to the general public. Except where used for medically-approved purposes, infant formula would no longer have a place in hospitals and health centres. At the same time, governments would take on a responsibility to inform mothers about infant feeding practices and the virtues of breast milk for child health. In effect, the Code was a policy checklist for countries trying to halt breastfeeding's downward trend. Although the industry had supported it during the drafting stages, at the last minute the infant formula companies lobbied fiercely for its rejection. Only the US voted against it on the grounds that it was contrary to US laws on free enterprise. In the years following the passage of the Code, many governments passed its recommendations into law. It became the platform for a later campaign to promote 'baby-friendly' hospitals – essentially, practices within maternity wards and MCH services which reinforced breastfeeding. This example of putting in place an effective international check to industry practice in relation to poor peoples' livelihoods, health and nutrition did not turn out to blaze a trail for similar agreements in a rapidly globalizing and commercializing world. Nonetheless it was an important achievement in its own right, and one that once again owes a great deal to Heyward.

In retirement

At the end of 1981, Heyward retired. His legacy to UNICEF was – UNICEF itself. No other international bureaucracy has ever been so quintessentially shaped by one individual, reflect-

ing a particular set of moral, administrative and political values, but without any visibility of ego or quest for public recognition. James Grant said of Heyward at the time: "He more than anyone else has helped to make UNICEF a living legend. Dick Heyward has been simultaneously for UNICEF its prime minister, its minister of overseas development, its secretary of health, education and welfare, its minister of home affairs and general trouble-shooter. He has been UNICEF's one man think-tank over the years." All of this was true. But to countless people down the years who worked with Heyward within UNICEF or in other parts of the international system, he was something else as well. He was at the same time an awe-inspiring and occasionally terrifying mentor whose incisive analytical capacity took one's breath away, and the most modest and helpful father figure, ready to engage on an equal basis with all those – and they were many – who sought out his

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guidance or asked for his views. The respect and affection with which he was held in UNICEF, even by some quite junior colleagues with whom he had rare contact during his front office tenure, was of an exceptional kind.

In his retirement, Heyward retained an office in UNICEF headquarters, and in spite of his previous eminence in the organization, took easily to the novelty of nobody-special status. His door was always open and he never stood on ceremony. His longstanding interest in nutrition led to a number of assignments in this context, including consultancies for the World Bank, IFAD, and the WHO/UNICEF joint nutrition programme, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. Until he suffered a stroke in 1997 at the age of 82, he was still travelling to countries such as Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique and Rwanda several times a year. Encountered by chance in a modest hotel in some African capital, he would remark that he was glad to have the opportunity to visit the field and see problems and meet people at first-hand – a privilege he had enjoyed too little in his later UNICEF years. Few people he met on those travels could possibly have guessed the exalted elevation of his earlier position, what he had done for the international system, and how much less significant an organization UNICEF would have been without him. Throughout his formal career and beyond it, his instinctive avoidance of grandstanding and self-promotion never left him. Few are those on any stage, national or international, who have done so much and claimed so little. ♦

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