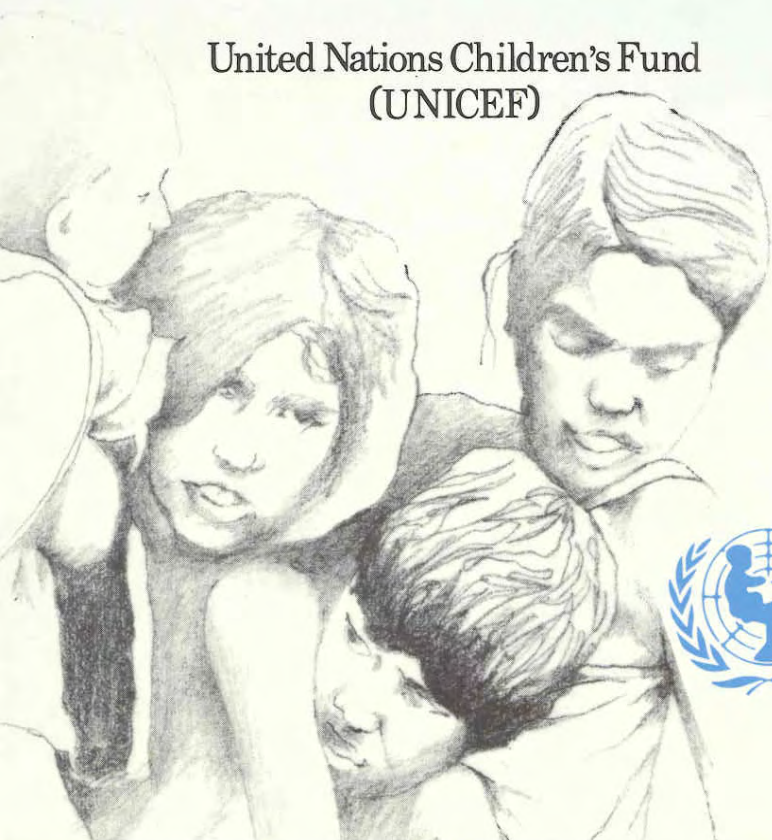


THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN 1982-83

United Nations Children's Fund
(UNICEF)



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James P. Grant
Executive Director of the
United Nations Children's Fund
(UNICEF)

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Foreword

This is the third annual 'State of the World's Children' report issued by James P. Grant, Executive Director of UNICEF.

Synthesising the experience of UNICEF's own work in over one hundred countries, as well as the views of leading international specialists, this year's report suggests that recent scientific and social breakthroughs have put into our hands the means to bring about a revolution in the health and well-being of the developing world's children. Given the will, it should now be possible to reduce child malnutrition and child deaths in the developing world by at least half before the end of this century — despite the dark economic times through which the world is now passing.

In making such breakthroughs relevant to the needs of the majority, the report emphasises that advances in social organization and people's participation are as important as technological innovation itself. And to illustrate the complex reality of that decentralised process, this year's 'Ideas in Action' report (Part II) tells the story of one community organization now being built — on the foundations of its own culture and traditions — in over seven hundred villages in Upper Volta. Written by Peter Adamson and seen through the eyes of two individual village people, 'The Rains' draws its characters and content from research undertaken in Yatenga Province during the early rains of 1982.

Finally, a statistical annexe brings together the latest United Nations figures on children and world development.

About the Authors

James Grant, an American citizen, was born in China in 1922. After graduating from Berkeley in 1943, he returned to China first in the armed forces and then for three years working in relief and development programmes. In 1951 he took a doctorate in Jurisprudence from Harvard and subsequently worked on American aid programmes in South Asia, becoming Director of the US aid mission to Sri Lanka. Returning to Washington, he became Deputy to the Director of the International Cooperation Administration, a predecessor of today's USAID, and, subsequently, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs. From 1964 to 1967 he served as Director of the AID programme in Turkey, with the personal rank of Minister, and from 1967 to 1969 as an Assistant Administrator of AID. In 1969 he became President and Chief Executive of the Overseas Development Council, where he served for eleven years and made many important contributions to international development strategy. He took up his present appointment as the third Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in January 1980. James Grant is also President of the Society for International Development.

Peter Adamson was born in England in 1946. After graduating from Oxford University he became founder editor of the New Internationalist magazine which has recently been awarded the 1981 United Nations Association Media Peace Prize and the 1981 Paul G. Hoffman Award for its work in the field of world development. In recent years, as well as writing on development issues for national newspapers in many countries, he has also worked closely with BBC Television on documentary programmes about world development.

Contents

PART I

The State of the World's Children *by James P. Grant*

New hope in dark times	3
A children's revolution	6
Oral rehydration therapy	7
Universal child immunization	10
The promotion of breastfeeding	12
Growth charts	17
Social organisation	21
Birth spacing	22
Political will	24
Food and jobs	27
Food supplements	32
Conclusion: symptom and cause	38

PART II

Ideas in Action *by Peter Adamson*

Map of Upper Volta	46
List of Illustrations	47
The Rains — a report from a village in Upper Volta. Recent years have seen an erosion of both the soil of the Sahel and the confidence of the Mossi people. But in Yatenga Province, more than seven hundred villages are now attempting to combat both kinds of erosion by building a new future on the foundations of their own past	59

ANNEXE

UN Statistics by country and region under the headings of: GNP, Population, Child population, Life expectancy, Infant mortality, Child death rates, Primary school enrollment rates, Adult literacy, Safe water, Daily calorie supply, Food Production 131

PART I
THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN
1982-83

New Hope in Dark Times

IF THE WORLD'S political leaders were to walk together through a village in the developing world they would only recognise about two per cent of the child malnutrition all around them. Indeed so invisible is the problem that, in one recent study, almost 60 per cent of mothers whose children were suffering from malnutrition believed that their children were growing normally and developing well.

The Third World's hunger is a hidden hunger. Visible malnutrition is rare. And it is time that the skin and bone image of the starving baby — an image which is too often used to represent the developing countries — was replaced by a greater international understanding of what child malnutrition really means.

Today, an invisible malnutrition touches the lives of approximately one quarter of the developing world's young children. It quietly steals away their energy; it gently restrains their growth; it gradually lowers their resistance. And in both cause and consequence it is inextricably interlocked with the illnesses and infections which both sharpen, and are sharpened by, malnutrition itself. Perhaps as many as half of all cases of severe child malnutrition, for example, are precipitated not primarily by the lack of food but by intestinal parasites, fever and infection — especially diarrhoeal infection — which depresses the appetite, burns the energy, and drains away the body-weight of the child.