

BOOK REVIEWS

THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN, 1982-83 by James P. Grant, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1982. £2.95. Also available from local UNICEF offices, and the UNICEF Information Divisions in New York and Geneva.

UNICEF observes a clearly worsening position for the world's children in response to the worldwide economic recession. Nevertheless, this report says, there are good reasons to believe that we have at our hands the means of bringing about a revolution in child health. The deepening of the present crisis is now being matched by social and scientific breakthroughs of recent years, on an equal if not greater scale.

Social breakthroughs consist in strategies of peoples' participation and community organization among the poor themselves, which are beginning to take hold in countries containing a majority of the developing world's population. Training of paraprofessional development workers to help poor communities create basic services, in combination with attempts to utilize the mutually reinforcing ties between health-care, water-supply, nutrition and education, can drastically increase the ratio between available resources and obtained results of development efforts.

Together with these social innovations, new scientific and technological advances offer new opportunities in the struggle against some of the most widespread problems of child health and nutrition. The four most significant developments and recommendations are described in detail in *The State of the World's Children*.

The first is Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT), which counteracts severe dehydration caused by diarrhea, by far the biggest single cause of death among Third World children. ORT is cheap and easy to use, "all" it needs is a "social breakthrough" to spread knowledge and means to mothers and children in the poorest regions of the world.

The second element making possible the children's revolution is the availability of more effective and heat-stable vaccines that do not need to be stored in refrigerators, thus making possible univer-

sal child immunization against measles, diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, and tuberculosis.

Third is the promotion of breast feeding which has declined steeply in recent decades, to reduce "the most unnecessary malnutrition of all," caused by powdered milk and unhygienic ways of administering it.

Finally, UNICEF recommends the mass use of home child-growth charts, to be kept by the mother as an indicator and guide to the proper feeding of the infant.

Altogether, these four program points would amount to only a few dollars per child. By 1990, they could be saving the lives of 20,000 children each day. This kind of progress is possible by nowadays technological and logistic standards. However, a committed political decision is necessary to allow the now-possible "children's revolution" in health and nutrition to take off, and thus enable them, beyond the immediate benefits of relieving symptoms of poverty, to participate in the wider socioeconomic changes which are necessary to abolish the poverty from which those symptoms grow. Healthy international development is built on healthy infant and child development, which requires a "children's revolution."

In addition to the Executive Director's overview, which is summarized above, the paperback is accompanied by statistical tables, and an "ideas in action" report from Upper Volta, titled "The Rains" and written by Peter Adamson.

Martin Koepfl

THE AFRICAN CHILD AND HIS ENVIRONMENT by R. Ogbonna Ohuche and Barnabas Otaala (eds.), for the Science Education Programme for Africa. UNEP Studies No. 3, Oxford, U.K.: Pergamon Press, 1981. 97 pp.

The history of the future is the present, so goes one of the many aphorisms of time. Nowhere is this more the case than in Africa where its future is clearly in the 45 percent of its population that is under 15 years of age. Thus this volume, prepared by the Science Education Programme for Africa (SEPA)

for the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and intended as a major contribution to the activities of the International Year of the Child, is very welcome.

It is edited by two senior scholars in education and educational psychology from West and East Africa with the help of colleagues in these disciplines surveying in all 13 countries. Thus it clearly reflects both the strength and narrowness of its disciplinary base. The volume has little to say, unfortunately, about African children and their environment in the sense of environment as understood by UNEP and the readers of this newsletter. The authors, rejecting as psychologists do, "the popularly defined" definition of environment, "usually confined to a geographic attribute," have thus thrown the baby out with the bathwater. By defining the environment psychologically as the "sum total of the stimulation the individual receives from conception till death," they provide little information and insight as to the role the natural and built environment plays in the development of African children.

This slim book is divided into three parts. There are chapters on the physical and health environment and the social environment of the African child. These are written at a general level without references or footnotes.

The next two chapters reflect the 13 nation survey and the activities of SEPA, the contractor for the volume, listing examples of educational services and other services (extracurricular education, youth clubs, recreation, educational radio and television) found in Africa.

The last two chapters, written in still a third style, provide an excellent review article on psychomotor and affective development (Chapter 6) and intellectual development (Chapter 7) among African children within the Piagetian paradigm. This paradigm holds that psychological development, both cognitive and emotional, follows a clearly-defined universal path within which the interaction of heredity and environment (as psychologically defined) serves either to accelerate or slow down the developmental process or to emphasize one set of cognitive or psychomotor abilities over another. Much work has been done in Africa, and there is a con-

siderable literature that addresses three issues found in research among groups of African children and between the African child and his European counterpart: 1) the universality of Piagetian stages, 2) the speeding up followed by the slowing down of development, and 3) the selective development of some abilities to the detriment of others.

For those ignorant of this literature, it serves as a good introduction, particularly to the issue of claims of precociousness in early development followed by a slowing down later on, often attributed to the suddenness of weaning in the African context. There are also a few items that would only tease readers of this newsletter as to selective differences in cognitive skills between children of nomad or hunter-gatherer peoples versus children of sedentary agricultural peoples.

What is missing? This would be a different volume if it had been put together by anthropologists, geographers, economists, nutritionists, demographers, or public health specialists. The world of work of the African child is almost totally absent. This world, which is mirrored in their play and through which the African child learns the useful and hazardous features of their environment while contributing to the well-being of their families, gets but an introductory paragraph early in the volume. The authors of the volume have tried but not surmounted equating the definition of education with formal schooling nor have they used the rich autobiographical literature of African childhood. While the authors acknowledge the urban bias of programs and activities in Africa, they cannot overcome it. Thus urban-rural differences receive some mention throughout the volume while the fundamental environmental differences of tropical rainforest, savanna, and sahel, of uplands and lowlands, of coasts and inlands, are mentioned by my count, but once. There is no reference to the small, but growing literature on children's urban hazards which includes studies of lead exposure in cities in Nigeria or auto accidents in several countries.

In short, this is a volume written as if prepared for UNESCO rather than UNEP.

Robert W. Kates

NETWORK

FOR ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT VOL. 3 NO.1 MARCH '83

EDITORIAL

Fresh insights into the nature of development planning may arise from looking at this process through the eyes of children. The changes caused by the development process affect their physical and social environment, where traditional skills as well as cultural values are transmitted through work, play, and social activities. Changes do happen everywhere in the world; however in Third World development, the forces that initiate and implement environmental changes are motivated by technologies, modes of thinking, and values that are "foreign" to children growing up in such areas. Development practitioners most often do not look at the needs of the personal development of young people, and an understanding of the underlying mechanisms is often inaccessible to these children and youngsters. Learning to control learning processes, induced by inevitable environmental modifications, seems to be a key issue for the younger generation in Third World countries.

The first two essays in this issue of *Network* report initiatives to deal with this problem from different but complementary perspectives. Cindi Katz, a Clark geographer, describes her research into children's environmental knowledge, how it is affected by development projects, and how, in turn, this might affect the achievement of overall development goals. Ray Lorenzo, a community planner affiliated with the City University of New York, discusses children's abilities to make concrete proposals about how development should happen, what changes should be made; he talks about

(ctd. p. 2)

A Sudanese Case Study

Children and Development

by Cindi Katz

Our definitions of children are often negative or anticipatory. We define children by what they are not or in anticipation of what they are to become. We say that they are not adults or they are the adults of the future, yet our work with children is frequently at cross-purposes with these definitions. We see children as "not adults" but do not always focus on what they do and know, and how it is distinct from adult action and knowledge. We know that children *grow* to adulthood, but we adopt a surprisingly



The younger girl and the boy pictured above are students in the village elementary school. The school vacation coincides with the early part of the growing season, which enables children to assist in their families' agricultural tasks. (Photo by Cindi Katz)

development, especially in Latin America.

The next deadline for proposals is 15 April, 1983. For application guidelines and a list of currently supported projects, contact:

Sara Bennett, Assistant Director
The Center for Field Research
10 Juniper Road, Box 127
Belmont, MA 02178 USA
Tel. (617) 489-3030

IN THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL	1
Children and Development	1
FROM THE DIRECTOR	2
Children as Catalysts of "Another Development"	4
Association on Women in Development	5
BOOK REVIEWS	6
RECENT PUBLICATIONS	8
CALENDAR	8
NEWS AND NOTES	9
GRANTS	9
Seminar in Resource Management at Clark University	10

SEMINAR IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT CLARK UNIVERSITY

The International Development Program at Clark University has set the date for the 1983 Summer Seminar in Resource Management, "Effective Management of Environmental Resources in Development Countries," to be held at Clark, June 6-24, 1983. The seminar will offer an interdisciplinary approach to environmental resource management needs in developing countries. Graduate students in development-related disciplines who are nationals of developing countries and who are currently in residence at U.S. universities are eligible to apply. Applicants will be selected on the basis of achievement, interest in practical problems of environmental resource management, and so as to insure a diversity of professional and academic backgrounds in the seminar group.

The seminar, the second in a series, provides the opportunity to link participants' current U.S. training to practical environmental resource management needs in developing countries through lectures, case studies, workshops, and field visits. Seminar topics will include environmental resource systems, remote sensing, mapping, economic and multi-

objective (environmental) project evaluation, institution-building, and others. The faculty, consisting of Clark University faculty, visiting scholars, and resource professionals, will be available to discuss participants' present or prospective graduate thesis topics as they relate to practical resource management needs.

The Clark Environmental Seminar Program is supported by the EXXON Education Foundation and Clark University. All participants will receive free room, board, and tuition, as well as some support for travel from their U.S. universities to Worcester, except as these summer study costs are already provided for in participants' grants for U.S. study.

For further information and application materials, write to:

Professor David C. Major
Executive Director
Clark Seminars in Resource
Management
International Development Program
Clark University
Worcester, MA 01610 USA

NETWORK

Network for Environment and Development
International Development Program
Center for Technology, Environment and Development
Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts 01610, USA

Robert Hates
CENTED