

destroyed by British, French and Israeli action, so be careful what you send them. But, dammit, when the blankets arrived—first of all, they were slow in coming— ... they were made in England. Every single blanket had a label on it, 'Made in England!' The Egyptian I was dealing with, Dr. Ali Fuad Ahmed, said that Gamal Abdel Nasser was furious when he heard about it. I said, 'Well, I don't blame him.' So I had all the labels removed and told them to keep them, but I also got a new supply of blankets in, from somewhere quite different.

"As a UNICEF official, you were always ready to respond to proposals put forward by governments but, on the other hand, we took every opportunity we had with, say, the Minister of Education or of Health to let them know what we could do. For example, one of the big and useful things UNICEF did in the Middle East was developing dairy processing plants—it wasn't just sending in powdered milk. The plant in Baghdad was quite a showpiece, and an English UNICEF specialist called Bob Cooper was in charge of developing such plants in many countries.

"We also worked intensively in parts of Iran on a campaign against malaria. There was close co-operation with WHO [World Health Organization], which gave technical advice, while we provided medication and vehicles. Dr. Otto Lehner, from Zermatt, was in charge of our office in Tehran, and he took me to see the Shah, who had become very interested in the campaign. The Shah gave us recollections of his childhood when he made journeys through places where people were dying of malaria.... With all that UNICEF or WHO speaks of 'our program,' it is always a government program. But WHO and UNICEF often sparked a government's interest in doing something. I think a lot of the initiative has to be taken by the United Nations.

"Some of the longer-term programs we supported were outside the health field. Eventually UNICEF became involved in education, by providing materials for books and schools, and the books had to be in the local language. The Canadian government was very helpful in providing paper for people to print their own books; I remember we did this in Madagascar.

"I was interested in getting UNICEF to be involved in areas other than health and nutrition programs. I was particularly concerned to get involved in social welfare, because there were a great many important social problems to be faced. One example was in Egypt, where after the Revolution, if a delinquent child had to be removed from his own home and sent to an institution, they were inclined to centralize everything and send the child to some institution in Cairo. Nasser eventually came to the conclusion [that] this was harmful—you can imagine a kid coming hundreds of miles down the Nile away from his own family—and he decided they should return to the old practices of keeping the child closer to home. The government asked us for someone who could advise how best to do this. We searched our brains and came up with the name of a man in Boston who was the director of the Home for Little Wanderers. He came out for a couple of years, financed by UNICEF, under the technical direction of the United Nations Bureau of Social Affairs and working for and with the Egyptian government. It worked beautifully, and was one of my big joys.