

BOOK REVIEWS

HUMAN RIGHTS IN HEALTH. Ciba Foundation Symposium 23. 1974 Associated Scientific Publishers, Amsterdam p.p. VIII & 304

No less than twenty-eight authorities have contributed to this symposium held at the Ciba Foundation in London in 1973, the year of the 25th Anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights and the 25th birthday of the World Health Organisation.

The organisers of the symposium have chosen four fundamental human rights on health as the minimum at which mankind should aim, namely, safe water to drink, sufficient food, protection against communicable disease, and access to the means of controlling fertility. The contributors try to explore the practical implications of adopting these four determinants of health as universal human rights in terms of funding, human and material resources, and management needs.

The authors and those that took part in the discussions have attempted to estimate the necessary costs and social changes and the effects on world development of converting these rights into realities. It is a publication that well merits the study by all health workers and sociologists of developing countries.

HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE. WHO Publication, Geneva, 1975 Edited by Kenneth W, Newman pp. 206. Sw. Fr. 36

'Health of the People' consists of ten chapters describing innovative methods of delivering primary health care to the populations, particularly rural areas, involving community action and participation.

One chapter describes the approach taken in India in integrating a traditional system of medicine, the Ayurvedic system, into the health services as a whole.

The other chapters fall into three groups dealing with countries where there were far-reaching changes at the national level (China, Cuba, Tanzania), those where there was an extension of the existing system (Iran, Niger, Venezuela), and those where there was community development in a limited local area (Guatemala, India, Indonesia).

Because of the methods used and the results obtained, the systems described have important

implications for the organisation of health services in many countries, both developing and developed.

This book should be read not only by health workers of all kinds but also by politicians and administrators concerned with setting up, extending or running health services.

THE WORK OF W.H.O. 1974

W.H.O. Publication, Geneva 1975. p.p. XVIII & 343 S.w. Fr. 18

This is the Annual Report of the Director General Dr. Halfdan Mahler to the World Health Assembly and to the United Nations.

In his opening paragraph he notes that the cutback in public spending in many countries as a result of economic instability threatens far-reaching consequences for the social services, not least for those concerned with health. W.H.O. and other international organisations have likewise been faced by reduced spending power, which has obliged them to look more closely than ever at their traditional programmes and to think more imaginatively about their future possibilities.

Owing to the perennial lack of trained manpower throughout the world W.H.O. has begun to formulate proposals for the training of village health workers who will be in direct contact with the rural population they are expected to serve.

The report concedes that the general situation of malaria has deteriorated, the disease now raging in some countries where its eradication seemed imminent a few years ago. The world situation in regard to smallpox, certain communicable diseases like poliomyelitis, syphilis and gonorrhoea, and non communicable diseases like cancer, diabetes and connective tissue affections are reviewed. W.H.O. has given help to some 60 countries as part of its family health programme to include maternal and child health, nutrition, family planning and the psychosocial health of the family.

This comprehensive report includes a general review as well as particular problems in each of the six WHO Regions.