

12-13-1991

Guatemala: Unicef Report On Child Malnutrition

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "Guatemala: Unicef Report On Child Malnutrition." (1991). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/6843>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

Guatemala: Unicef Report On Child Malnutrition

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Friday, December 13, 1991

According to a report titled, "Análisis de Situación del Niño e la Mujer," released Dec. 3 by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 33.5% of Guatemalan children under age five are malnourished, compared to 6.1% in Costa Rica. Proportions in Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras are lower than in Guatemala. Next, the weight/height ratio of 57.8% of Guatemalan children under five is low, compared to 6.4% of Costa Rican counterparts. In June 1990, during a national vaccination campaign, UNICEF surveyed 74,000 children in the zero to five age group in Totonicapán, Jalapa, Zacapa, Escuintla, Santa Rosa and Baja Verapaz departments. Of the total, 41.2% suffered from mild to severe malnutrition. The report said the proportion of child victims of moderate malnutrition nearly doubled between December 1988 and March 1990, while severe malnutrition increased from 2.6% to 4.3%. According to UNICEF, the "direct relationship between poverty and child malnutrition in Guatemala was clearly established in surveys carried out during the 1970s and 1980s." One such study carried out in 1980 showed that the average incidence of underweight children among agricultural workers with access to 1.4 ha. was 37.8%, compared to 17.5% in households with access to 3.5 ha. In 1988, the cost of daily minimum food consumption requirements was estimated at 9.93 quetzals (US\$1.90), while average daily earnings came to 5.63 quetzals (US\$1.12). Clearly, said the report, most Guatemalans were unable to meet daily nutritional needs. UNICEF said studies of marginal urban populations demonstrated how socio-economic factors impact on the variety, quantity and quality of the foods that mothers feed infants and young children. The report concluded that survey research demonstrates that even if malnourished children could receive adequate medical attention they would continue to have serious health problems. Malnutrition, UNICEF concluded, can be eradicated only through substantive economic development, and a more equitable distribution of income. (Basic data from ACAN-EFE, 12/03/91)

-- End --