

Jim Mayrides - Travels with Dick Heyward

Probably the trip which cemented my career in UNICEF came in 1975 when I was stationed in New York I accompanied our Deputy Executive Director, EJR (Dick) Heyward on an extended trip through parts of Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and Peru. Dick was number two in UNICEF and had started there and only retired in 1980. He was extremely intelligent and well read. He never suffered fools lightly, so I was a bit tentative at the start of our journey.

We first landed in Santiago, Chile to attend a large meeting of UNICEF country Reps with the Regional Director, Carlos Martínez Sotomayor, a former Foreign Affairs Secretary in Chile. It was a good meeting and I learned that Dick spoke more spanish than he let on.

I also learned first hand what inflation meant. When we lived in Santiago in 1964 to 66, our monthly rent was 500 escudos or US \$ 100. During our stay, I went to a kiosk to buy a box of matches. It cost 500 escudos. It was an instant lesson in economics which I will never forget.

We then traveled to Buenos Aires, Argentina where Isabel Peron had succeeded her husband Juan Peron in the presidency. A series of tough meetings were held because in those days Argentina was still considered a second world country with wealth and advances for her people. We ended up flying north to the city of Salta and then driving to Bolivia.

After stopping along the way to visit projects benefiting children in that mostly less affluent area of the north of Argentina, we reached the border near Tarija, Bolivia. It was after 6:00 p.m. and the soldiers guarding the border indicated that the border was now closed until the next day and they had orders to not allow anyone to cross. Our

arguments fell on deaf ears, so I walked down the river bank about 100 yards and found a guy with a small boat. Dick and I carried our samsonites over and for a few pesos, he agreed to ride us across the river to a landing where the soldiers could not see us. On the other side we learned that our hotel was only a quarter of a mile up the road. We must have been an interesting sight sitting in a small wooden outboard boat with our suitcases in our laps, but so be it, we managed a room and a meal.

The next day we were met by UNICEF staff from the Lima office which covered Bolivia and set off to visit projects in Tarija on our way to Potosi and Sucre. We reached Potosi by late afternoon, a city at 14,000 feet above sea level. We learned that we would travel still until we reached Sucre. Potosi is famous for the mountain of silver which stands behind the city and which had allowed the spanish conquerors millions in wealth to send back to the King of Spain.

Most everyone went with city authorities to see the silver museum and other places of interest, while I decided to go shopping for some sustenance for the perilous night trip over and down the Andes to Sucre. I managed enough bread and lunchmeat and bananas and soft drinks for the 3 cars full of people. As luck would have it, one of the vehicles broke down at the top of the mountain.

I began to make sandwiches and at least we were fed because as it turned out we did not reach Sucre until almost 2:00 a.m. There, we were met by two campesinos in front of the hotel who gave us the documents for the project visits we would make the next morning.

At breakfast some four hours later, Dick asked me what I thought of some analytical comments on page 60 of the documents. I had to admit that I was so exhausted from the day's travel that I needed to sleep. He admitted the same, but said that the two fellows had waited until the wee hours to give us the papers, so he wanted to respect that. I was speechless, but learned an excellent lesson. And my admiration for the man increased.

We visited parts of Chuquisaca where in 1990, when I had been UNICEF Rep to Bolivia, we established a series of projects for these same highlands. The problem of endemic goitre (bocio) which causes the thyroid gland to enlarge to the size of a grapefruit. The bocio also causes mental and physical retardation and a loss of maybe 20 IQ points if less severe. It is a result of a lack of iodine in our diets. In our lifetime we only need to consume a small teaspoon of iodine in iodized salt. Without it entire communities can become iodine deficient with the resulting complex health problems. During our trip, we saw many severe cases of goitre.

In Sucre, we met with the Cardinal, His Eminence Toribio Ticona Porco and he and Dick Heyward went at it because of our work with the government to relay ideas about family planning. Then we met with the health authorities who were asking for more from us on family planning. In both meetings, I recall that Dick responded politely, no to both requests. When pushed by both gentlemen, he politely said, "what part of no don't you understand". Another lesson for me.

From Sucre, we drove to Lake Titicaca to get on a hydrofoil boat headed to the Peruvian port on the other side. The customs officer was out to lunch and we were on a schedule so we decided to depart and sort it out in Lima if need be. The end result is that we entered and left a landlocked country by water and never had our passports stamped either way.

Once in Peru, we were met by a young U.N. volunteer who would drive us to Puno, some 3 hours distant. Knowing the terrain, as we started on our way, I noticed that the gas tank was almost empty and knew there were no gas stations until Puno, having made the trip a number of times while stationed in Peru. Dick just looked at me and smiled and chuckled.

We did our thing in Puno and went by car across the andes to Cusco where we tried to visit Machu Picchu. However, our train to the ruins derailed high in the mountains and

we walked back some 5 miles (or so it seemed) in a snowstorm at 11,500 feet to civilization. From there we went on to Lima.

During these trips, on one occasion, I asked Dick how he joined UNICEF. He had been a delegate from the government of Australia to the UNICEF executive board, originally from Tasmania and a young 30 year old. Maurice Pate, our first ExDir was surprised by the depth of the questions and comments offered during two board sessions.

After the second time, Pate approached Dick and said very clearly, look, I cannot defend our positions on many things with you on that side of the table. I want you from now on my side, sitting right next to me. That is why EJRH never was promoted in his 30 some years of service. We sat many hours in the back of a jeep going across the Andes, now some 45 years ago and I still treasure the wisdom he imparted to me to this day. I lament the fact that I did not have a recorder with me to tape those hours of discussion and wisdom I received.

We completed our work in Lima and were escorted to the airport where I still had a great rapport with the ladies in the Braniff lounge from my CRS days. As we entered the aircraft, I gave him his boarding pass which indicated that he had a row in first class (as did I) to himself for the night flight to New York. He sort of grinned at me and said, I guess this is some more of your good work. Unforgettable words from an unforgettable human being and senior colleague and teacher.

I very much enjoyed myself when I was chosen to emcee the retirement party for the UNICEF giants, EJRH Heyward and Charles Egger in 1980 with our new boss, Jim Grant present. A lesser but just as important giant at that function was Herman Stein, also unforgettable in the annals of UNICEF.

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