UNICEF

80 Years Standing Up for Children

Educational activity proposal to celebrate World Children's Day

Activity for children aged 16–18 years.

20 November 2026

unicef
per a cada infant

About the activity

80 Years of UNICEF: A Journey Through the History of Children's Rights

World Children's Day is celebrated on 20 November, commemorating the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

This year, 2026, UNICEF is also celebrating its 80th anniversary: eight decades of work to promote the rights, protection and well-being of every child around the world.

To mark this occasion with schools, we are proposing an educational activity that invites students to discover some of the most important moments in UNICEF's history and the evolution of children's rights through a chronological journey.

What does the activity involve?

The activity consists of creating a collective timeline featuring the main milestones in UNICEF's history, from its establishment in 1946 to the present day.

Using different cards containing dates, texts and images, students will discover key events and place them in chronological order to understand how the protection of children has evolved over the years.

What do we aim to achieve?

- Learn about UNICEF's history and its work for children.
- Discover some of the major advances in the recognition and protection of children's rights.
- Understand that children's rights are the result of a long journey and that they must continue to be defended.
- Reflect on the challenges that still affect millions of children around the world today.

Practical information

- Who is it for: Schools in Andorra.
- Date: Around 20 November 2026.
- Duration: Approximately 1–1.5 hours (depending on the age group).
- Format: A collaborative and participatory activity.

Materials provided



Three materials are provided to carry out the activity:

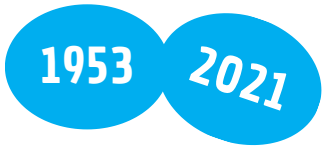
1. **Reference timeline**

A reference document for teachers containing all the milestones in chronological order, together with their corresponding dates and explanations. It serves as a guide to help teachers lead the activity and check the final result.



2. **Event cards**

Cards featuring different moments in UNICEF's history. Students will read, interpret and arrange these cards in chronological order.



3. **Year circles**

Circular pieces displaying the years corresponding to the different milestones. Students will place them next to each event as they build the timeline.

How does the activity work?

1. **Prepare the space.** Find a spacious area where the timeline can be created. It can be set up on the classroom board, placing the cards in a horizontal sequence, or along the classroom walls to create a chronological journey.

2. **Distribute the cards.** Hand out the event cards and year circles to the students or the different working groups.

3. **Read, discover and arrange.** Students read the cards, discover what happened and try to identify when each event took place. To do so, they will need to match the milestones with the corresponding years and arrange them in chronological order.

4. **Build the timeline!** Place the cards and years in the correct order until the 80-year journey through UNICEF's history is complete. Teachers can use the reference timeline to guide the activity and check the final result.

Extra clues for students

If you think it would be helpful, you can give students the *"A few clues to help you along!"* worksheet, which contains clues to help them identify some of the years and complete the timeline.

TIMELINE

1946	• Establishment of UNICEF • Logo (globe) • Beginnings of UNICEF's supply operations
1947	• First private donation • First National Committee
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1953	• UNICEF becomes a permanent part of the United Nations • Logo (child drinking)
1959	Declaration of the Rights of the Child
1962	Relocation of the Supply Centre to Copenhagen
1965	Nobel Peace Prize
1975	Logo (UNICEF lettering)
1970	Oral Rehydration Therapy
1984	Goodwill Ambassador Tetsuko Kuroyanagi
1985	Mass Vaccination in El Salvador
1989	Convention on the Rights of the Child
1990	First World Summit for Children
1994	School-in-a-Box
2002	Optional Protocols
2004	Goodwill Ambassador Jackie Chan

TIMELINE

2005	• Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS campaign • Goodwill Ambassador David Beckham
2007	RUTF
2010	Goodwill Ambassador Leo Messi
2011	Third Optional Protocol
2013	Goodwill Ambassador Katy Perry
2015	• Sustainable Development Goals • Ratification of the Convention by Somalia and South Sudan
2016	Logo (blue box)
2017	BTS LOVE MYSELF campaign
2018	Goodwill Ambassador Millie Bobby Brown
2020	Africa declared free of poliovirus
2021	COVAX - vaccination
2022	War in Ukraine
2025	Artificial Intelligence
2026	• Goodwill Ambassador Lamine Yamal • 80 years of UNICEF

A FEW CLUES TO HELP YOU ALONG!

You can use these clues to discover the missing years and complete the timeline. Read them carefully, make connections and... put your thinking skills to the test!

- There are three events from 1946.
- There are two events from each of the following years: 1947, 1953, 2005, 2015 and 2026.
- 19 years after UNICEF was established, the organisation was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. 29 years later, School-in-a-Box was created.
- Leo Messi became a Goodwill Ambassador between Jackie Chan and Katy Perry.
- Leo Messi became a Goodwill Ambassador 16 years before Lamine Yamal.
- In 2015, two countries located near the equator ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- In the same year that the COVID-19 pandemic began, Africa was declared free of wild poliovirus.
- The year David Beckham became a Goodwill Ambassador, a campaign against AIDS was also launched.
- Mass vaccination in El Salvador took place two years before the campaign in Lebanon.



The Creation of UNICEF

Following the Second World War, the International Children's Emergency Fund (ICEF) was established to help children affected by the conflict.

Its mission was to protect the health of all children and provide assistance without discrimination.

Later, the United Nations officially established the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

UNICEF receives its first private donation!

Logo



Logo



Logo



Logo



The Beginnings of UNICEF's Supply Operations

UNICEF's supply operations began in a small warehouse located in the basement of the United Nations building in New York.

From there, food, medicines, clothing and other essential supplies were stored, prepared and shipped to help children around the world.

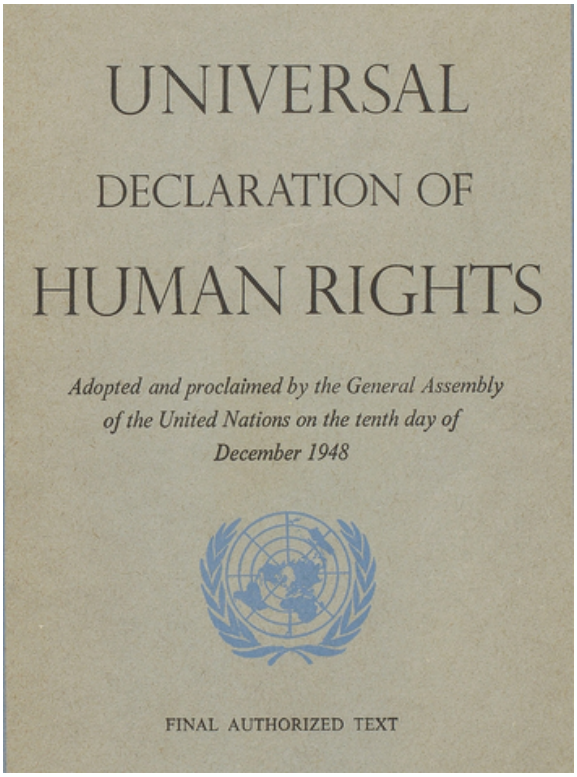
Over time, these operations grew so much that the facilities became too small.



UNICEF's First National Committee

The first UNICEF National Committee is established in the United States.

National Committees are independent, non-profit organisations that support UNICEF's work by raising funds to help improve the lives of children around the world.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations on 10 December 1948.

It is a document that sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that all people have simply because they are human, regardless of their origin, sex, religion or any other status.

It recognises rights such as life, freedom, equality, education and protection against discrimination.

Els 10 principis de la Declaració de 1959

1. Dret a la igualtat
2. Protecció especial i desenvolupament
3. Dret a un nom i nacionalitat
4. Seguretat social, salut i alimentació
5. Infants amb discapacitat
6. Amor, afecte i família
7. Educació gratuïta i joc
8. Prioritat en la protecció
9. Protecció contra l'abandó, la crueltat i l'explotació
10. Protecció contra la discriminació i educació en la pau

Declaration of the Rights of the Child

The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations on 20 November 1959.

It sets out ten principles recognising that all children need special protection and care in order to grow up healthy, free, with dignity and in safety.

It upholds rights such as having a name and a nationality, receiving an education, playing and being protected from all forms of neglect and exploitation.

UNICEF Becomes a Permanent United Nations Agency

UNICEF is no longer temporary and becomes a permanent agency of the United Nations. The words “International” and “Emergency” are removed from its official name, but the acronym UNICEF is retained.



Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations on 20 November 1989.

It is an international treaty that recognises children as rights-holders and establishes that the states that ratify it have a legal obligation to respect and uphold those rights.

It sets out the rights of all children under the age of 18, including the right to health, education, protection, play and to be heard. It is the first international treaty to comprehensively recognise children's rights.

Relocation of the Supply Centre to Copenhagen

UNICEF relocates its supply centre from New York to a former arms factory at the port of Copenhagen, Denmark.

This move makes better use of maritime and international transport connections to distribute aid around the world.

From this centre, shipments of medical, educational and health supplies are prepared and dispatched to support UNICEF programmes and improve children's living conditions.



Nobel Peace Prize

"The well-being of today's children is inseparably linked with the peace of tomorrow's world." – Henry Labouisse



UNICEF is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to promote solidarity among nations.

This recognition highlights its work for children and its role in building a more peaceful world.

UNICEF Executive Director Henry Labouisse receives the award in Norway.

Oral Rehydration Therapy

In response to the high number of child deaths caused by diarrhoea, UNICEF promotes a mixture of salts and glucose that can be used to treat dehydration.

Oral rehydration therapy has helped save millions of children's lives around the world.



A boy in India receives oral rehydration salts.

Tetsuko Kuroyanagi

A renowned Japanese actress, writer and television presenter is appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

Over the years, she visits nearly 40 countries and territories to raise awareness of the challenges faced by the most vulnerable children.

She is the longest-serving UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

Jackie Chan

LActor, director and martial arts expert Jackie Chan is appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador during a visit to Cambodia.

For many years, he has devoted part of his career to supporting humanitarian initiatives and working with charitable organisations around the world.

Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS

UNICEF launches the *Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS* campaign to mobilise resources and accelerate efforts to protect children at risk of HIV and AIDS.

Africa Declared Free of Wild Poliovirus

From this point onwards, the virus remains endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

David Beckham



Lormer English footballer David Beckham is appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

Ten years later, in 2015, he launches the 7 Fund with UNICEF, an initiative to help children around the world, especially girls, overcome challenges such as violence, child marriage and lack of access to education.

Leo Messi



Argentine footballer Leo Messi is appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador.

Shortly after his appointment, he travels to Haiti to raise awareness of the situation of children affected by the earthquake.

In addition to working with UNICEF, he establishes his own foundation, which supports healthcare projects to improve children's lives.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child Reaches 196 States Parties

Somalia and South Sudan ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, making it the most widely ratified international human rights treaty in history, with 196 states parties. The United States is the only country that has not yet ratified it.

Millie Bobby Brown



The British actress, known for her role in the series Stranger Things, is appointed UNICEF's youngest-ever Goodwill Ambassador on World Children's Day 2018.

"Becoming a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador is a dream come true. I'm really looking forward to meeting children and young people, listening to their stories and giving a voice to their needs."

Katy Perry

The American singer is appointed a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in recognition of her commitment to children.

She has visited countries such as Vietnam and Madagascar to raise awareness of the needs of the most vulnerable children and has used her voice to advocate for their rights. In 2016, she receives UNICEF's Audrey Hepburn Humanitarian Award.



BTS

Between 2017 and 2025, the music group BTS and their fans around the world raise approximately US$6.7 million through the LOVE MYSELF campaign.

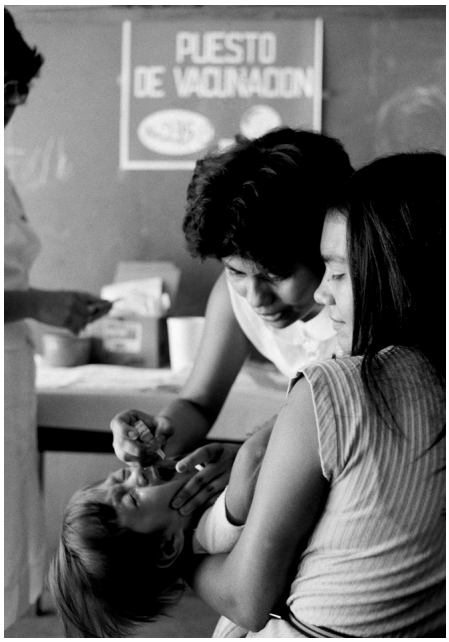


Lamine Yamal

"I am very proud to become a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. When I was a child, all I had was a family, a football, a park and a dream. Playing football gave me hope for the future. (...) I know how important it is for children to have a safe place to play, enjoy being children, discover the world, imagine and grow. (...) When they are deprived of the opportunity to play, they also lose opportunities to develop skills, make friends and imagine a better future."

Mass Vaccination in El Salvador

A ceasefire in the civil war in El Salvador, facilitated with UNICEF's support, makes it possible to organise three days of mass vaccination to protect children.



The initiative is based on the idea that children should be a zone of peace and that ceasefire periods should be established to allow humanitarian aid to reach them. This model is later applied in Lebanon (1987), Sudan (1989) and Iraq (1991), among other countries.

UNICEF supports the Ministry of Health in a vaccination campaign that protects 400,000 children against five diseases: diphtheria, measles, polio, tetanus and whooping cough.

First World Summit for Children in New York

In 1990, 40,000 children still died every day before reaching the age of six. To find joint solutions, UNICEF brings together 150 heads of state and government in New York for the first World Summit for Children. Never before had so many representatives from such a diverse range of countries gathered to address a single issue.

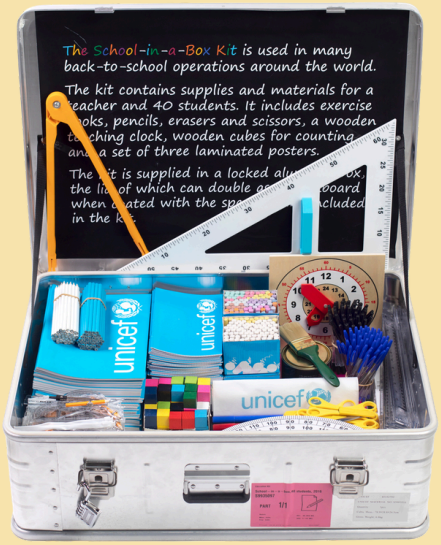


UNICEF and UNESCO create the School-in-a-Box to ensure that children can continue learning during humanitarian crises.

The box contains school supplies, toys, a radio and a tin of paint that can turn any flat surface into a blackboard.

This allows teachers to set up a makeshift classroom almost anywhere and teach around 40 students for at least three months.

School in a box



Optional Protocols

ETwo international treaties that complement the Convention on the Rights of the Child enter into force:

1. **Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict:** requires states to take measures to prevent the recruitment and use of children as soldiers.
2. **Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography:** strengthens the protection of children against these forms of exploitation.

Third Optional Protocol

A third Optional Protocol is adopted and enters into force in 2014. It allows children to submit complaints directly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child when they believe their rights have been violated.

RUTF: Treatment for Severe Acute Malnutrition

UNICEF works with the World Health Organization (WHO) to develop Plumpy'Nut, a peanut-based paste designed to treat children with severe acute malnutrition. A treatment lasting around seven weeks is often enough to help them recover and regain a stable state of health.



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On 25 September, the heads of state and government of the 193 United Nations Member States adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This agenda includes 17 goals to advance economic, social and environmental development. More than 100 Member States renew their commitment to children's rights within the framework of these goals.



Equitable Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccines

UNICEF plays a key role in the global procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX initiative. In February 2021, the first doses arrive in Ghana and, just 42 days later, more than 100 countries and territories have received them.

That year, COVAX distributes 958 million doses to 144 countries, in one of the largest and most complex vaccination and distribution campaigns in history.



Febrer de 2021, al magatzem d'UNICEF a Dubai.

War in Ukraine

The escalation of the war in Ukraine puts millions of children at risk. Many are forced to flee their homes, separated from their families and face disruptions to their education, healthcare and protection. The crisis triggers the largest wave of migration in Europe since the Second World War and also affects many host countries, including Switzerland.

UNICEF provides emergency assistance in Ukraine and neighbouring countries, ensuring access to safe drinking water, healthcare services and psychosocial support, child protection, financial assistance, and safe spaces and learning environments for children and families.



On 8 July 2024, rescue teams, hospital staff and volunteers clear the rubble and search for victims following the attack on Okhmatdyt Children's Hospital in Kyiv. UNICEF provides water and hygiene supplies.

Artificial Intelligence

Through its *AI Strategy 2025–2030: AI for Every Child*, UNICEF establishes a framework to ensure that artificial intelligence is always used with children's best interests in mind. The strategy focuses on protecting their rights, ensuring equitable access to AI and promoting digital solutions that benefit children around the world.



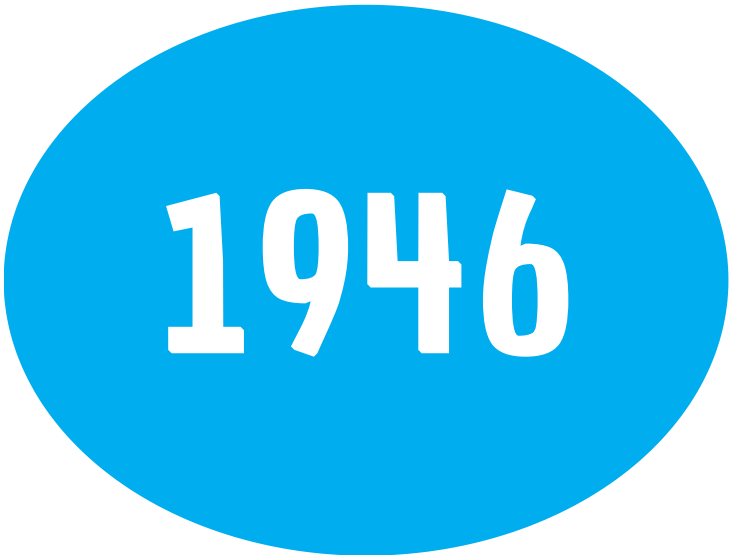
80 Years Standing Up for Children

1946 — 2026

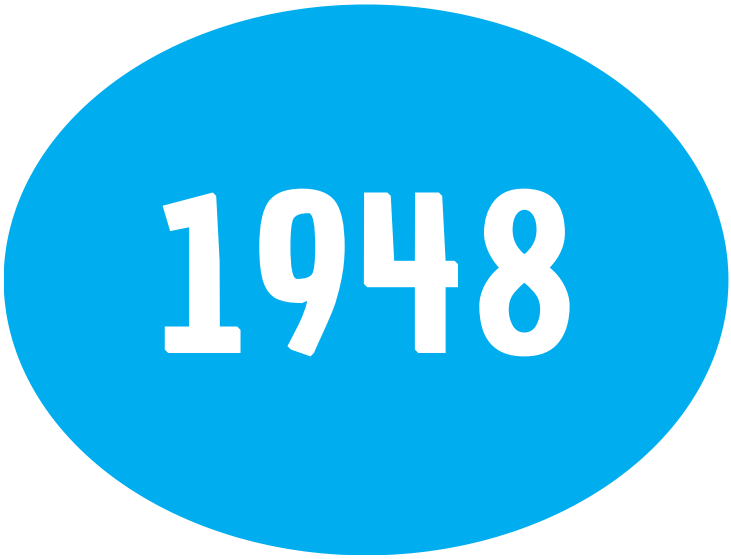
For 80 years, UNICEF has worked to protect the rights of every child, promote their well-being and ensure they have opportunities to grow, learn and thrive.

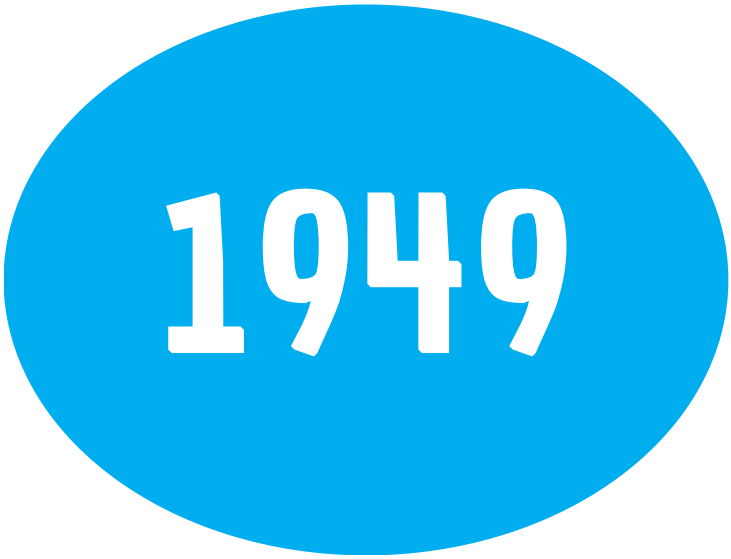
From the first efforts to help children in the aftermath of the Second World War to the challenges we face today, UNICEF continues to work towards a world where every child can enjoy their rights and have a better future.

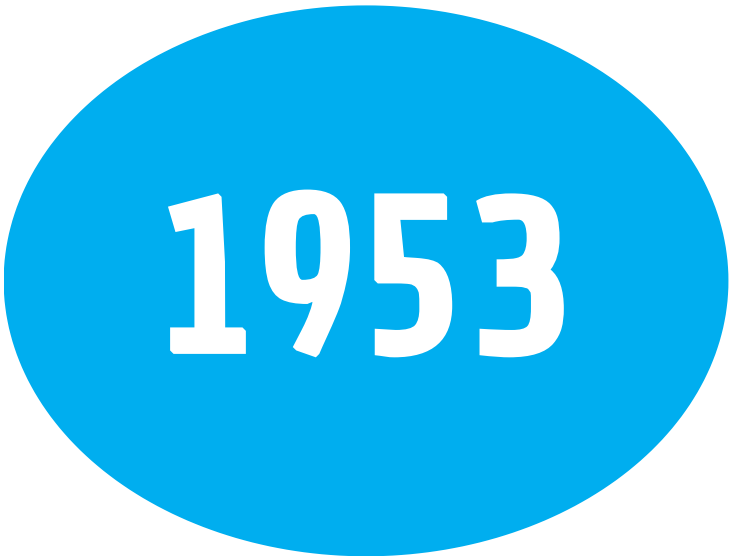
Because every child, wherever they are, deserves to grow up with rights, opportunities and hope.

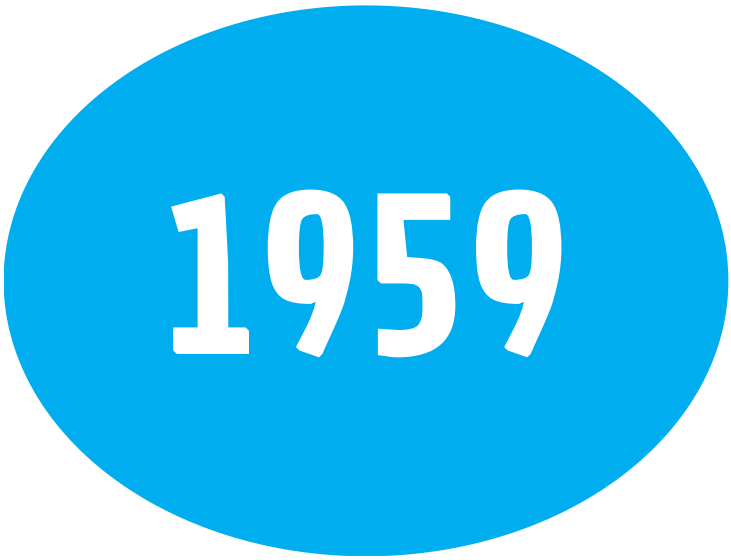

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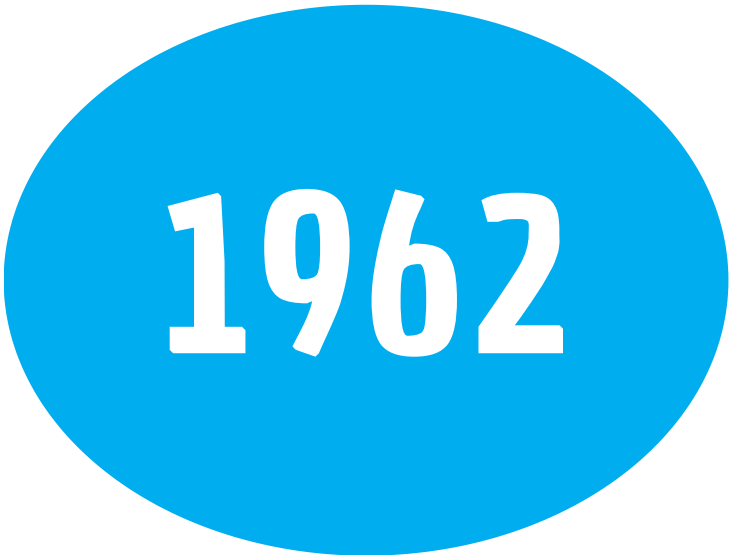

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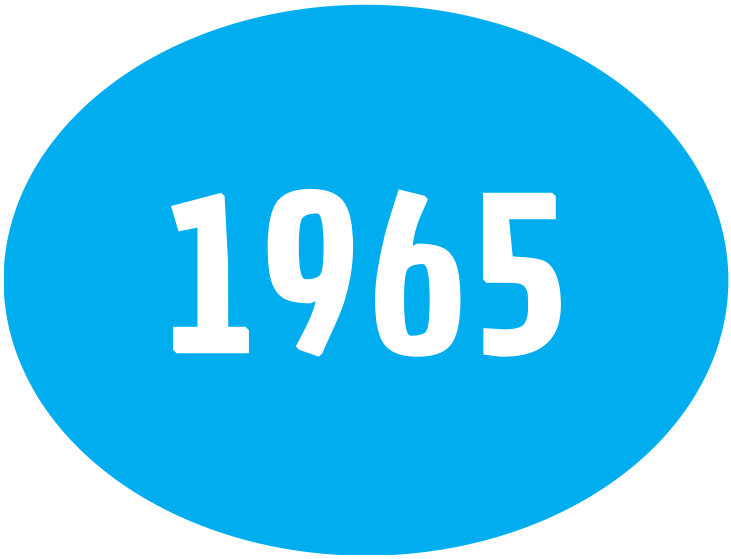

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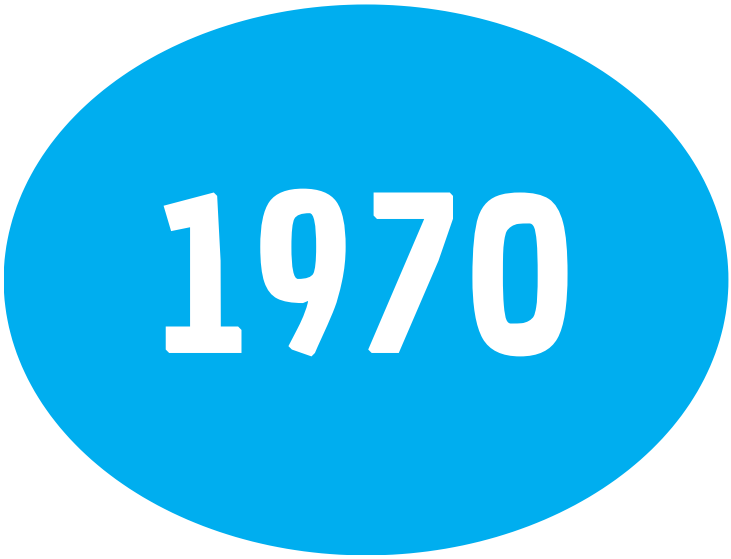

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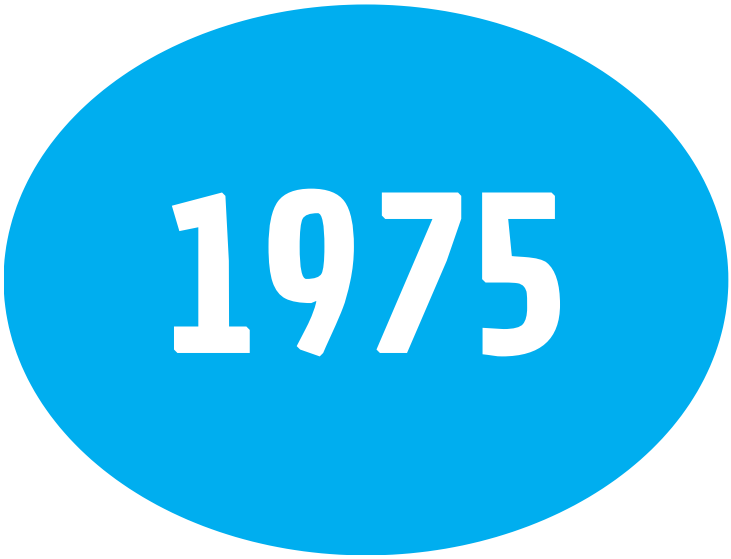

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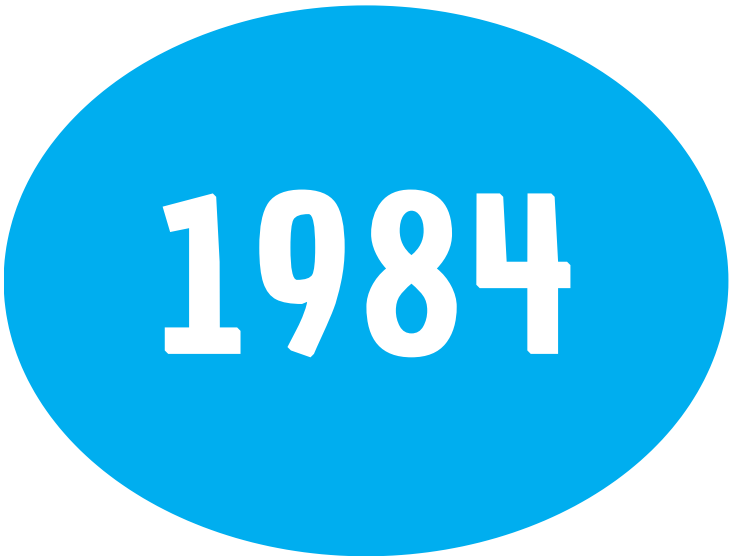

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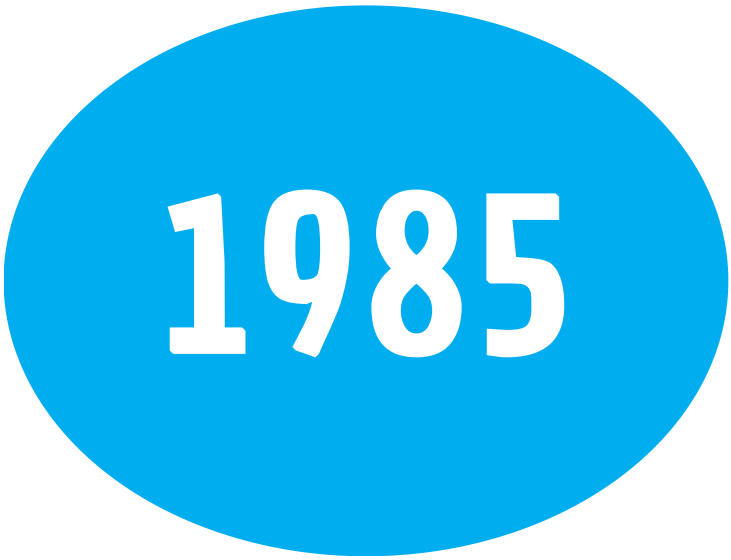

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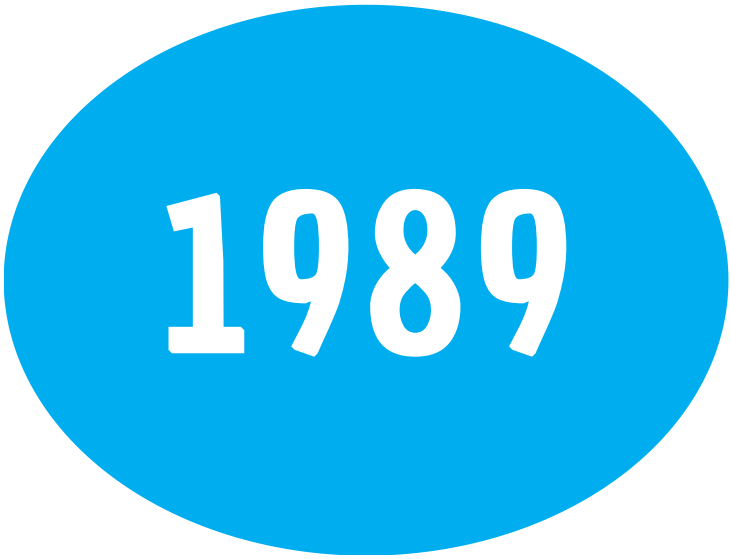

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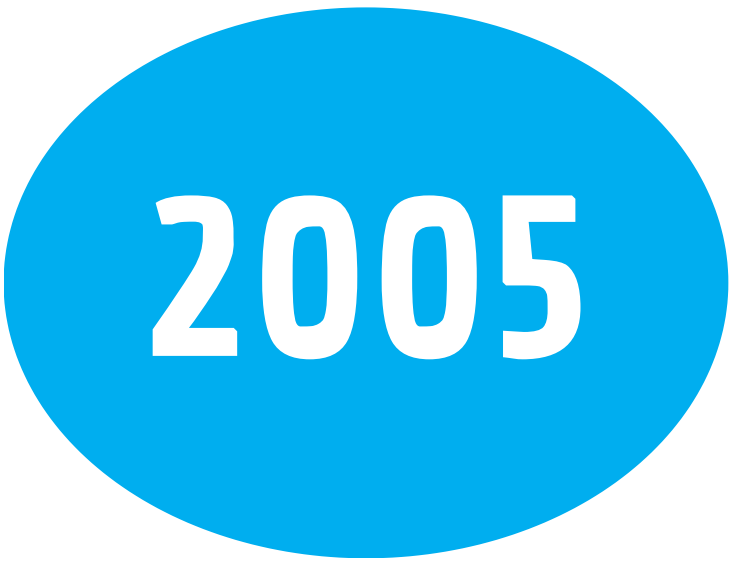

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