UNICEF

80 Years Standing Up for Children

Educational activity proposal to celebrate World Children's Day

Activity for children aged 6–8 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:

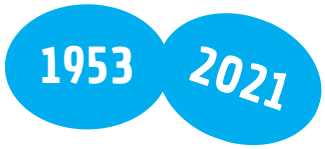
1. **Reference timeline**

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)
1947	• First private donation • First National Committee
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1949	First UNICEF greeting card
1959	Declaration of the Rights of the Child
1984	Goodwill Ambassador Tetsuko Kuroyanagi
1989	Convention on the Rights of the Child
1994	School-in-a-Box
2007	RUTF
2010	Goodwill Ambassador Leo Messi
2016	Logo (blue box)
2021	COVAX - vaccination
2022	War in Ukraine
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!

- The Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted 37 years ago.
- The Goodwill Ambassadors were appointed in 1984, 2010 and 2026.
- UNICEF received its first private donation shortly after it was established.
- There are two events from each of the following years: 1946, 1947 and 2026.
- RUTF was developed 60 years after the establishment of the first UNICEF National Committee.



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!

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.



Logo

UNICEF's First Greeting Card

Illustrated with a drawing by a seven-year-old girl from former Czechoslovakia, its sale becomes an important fundraising initiative for UNICEF.



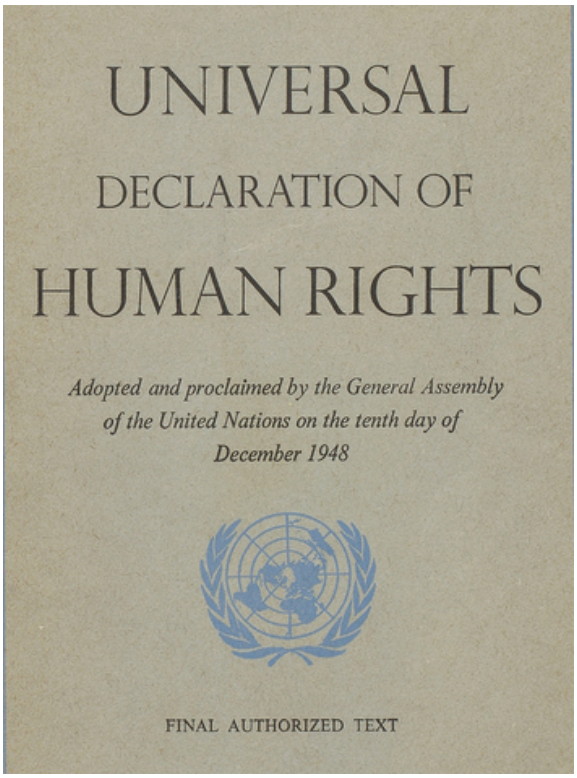


Convention on the Rights of the Child

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.



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.

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.



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.



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."

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

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.



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.

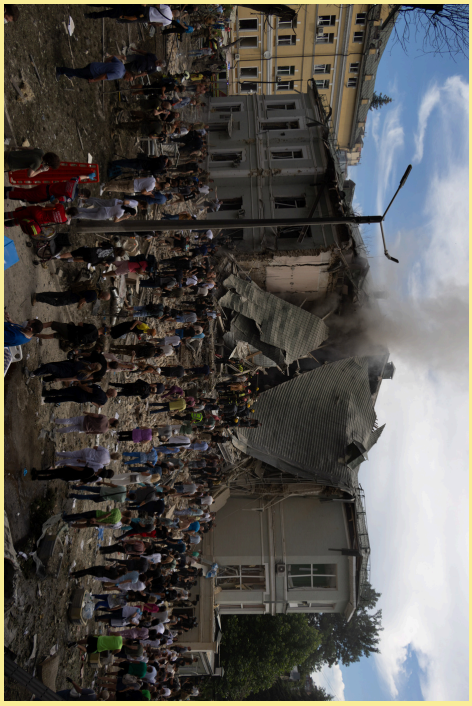
That year, COVAX distributes 958 million doses to 144 countries, in one of the largest and most complex vaccination and distribution campaigns in history.



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.



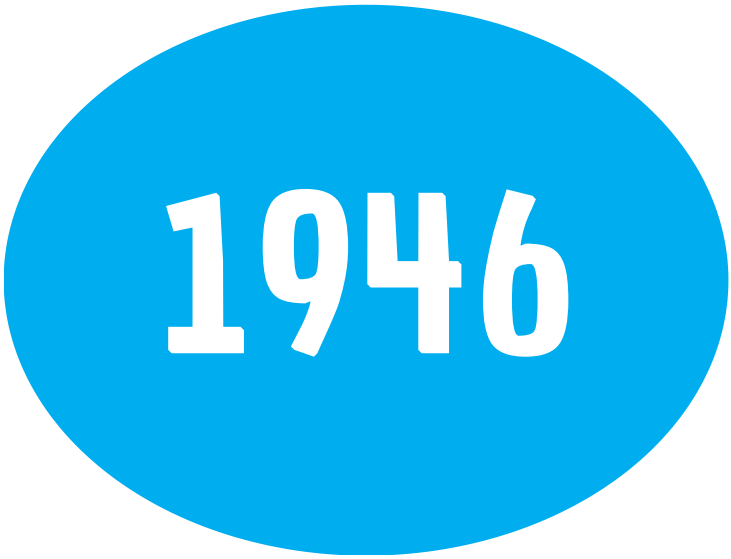
80 Years Standing Up for Children

1946 — 2026

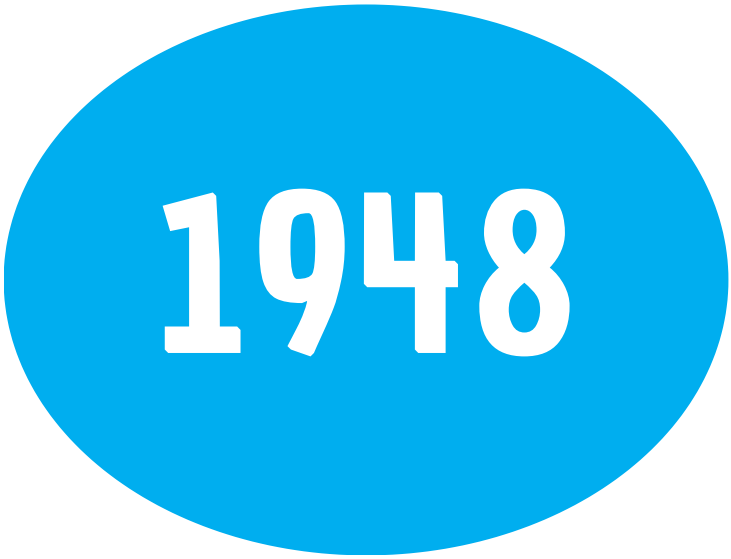
For 80 years, UNICEF has worked to protect the rights of every child, promote their well-being and ensure they have opportunities to grow, learn and thrive.

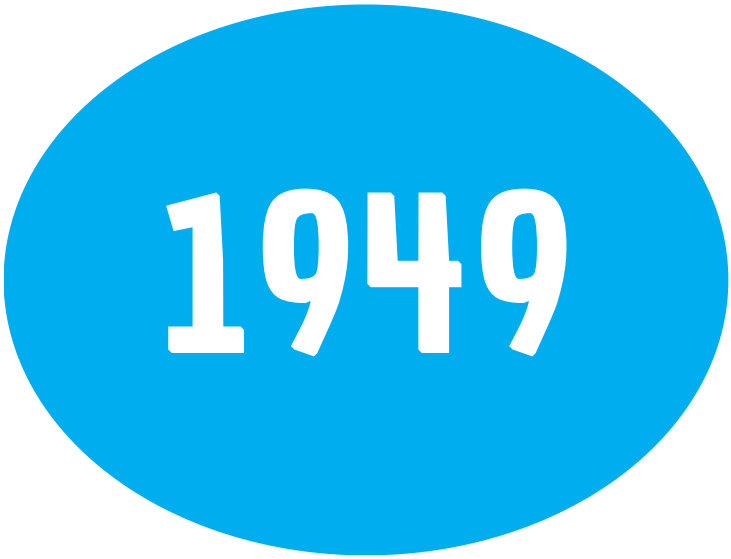
From the first efforts to help children in the aftermath of the Second World War to the challenges we face today, UNICEF continues to work towards a world where every child can enjoy their rights and have a better future.

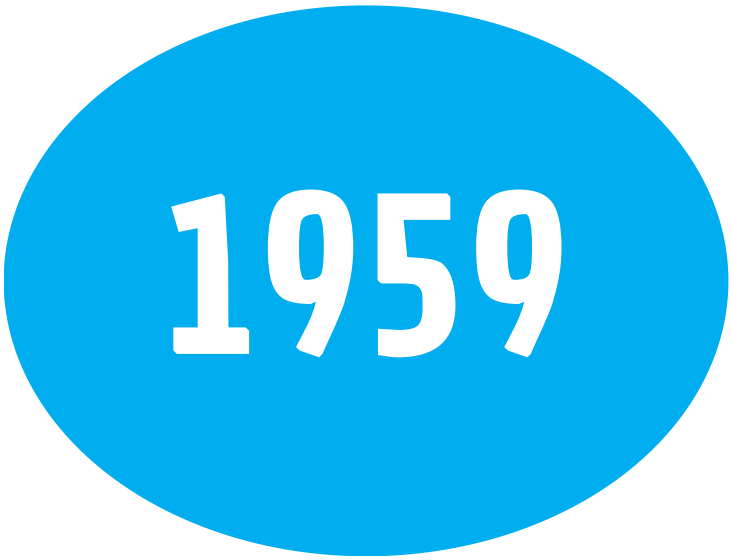
Because every child, wherever they are, deserves to grow up with rights, opportunities and hope.

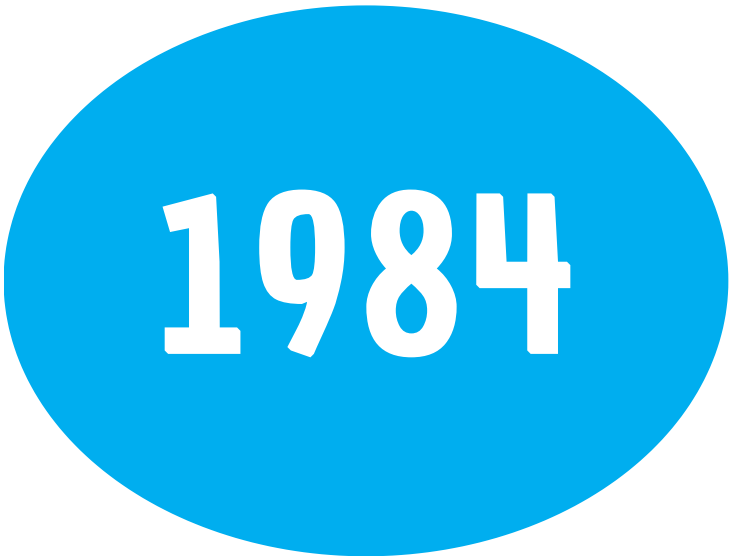

1946

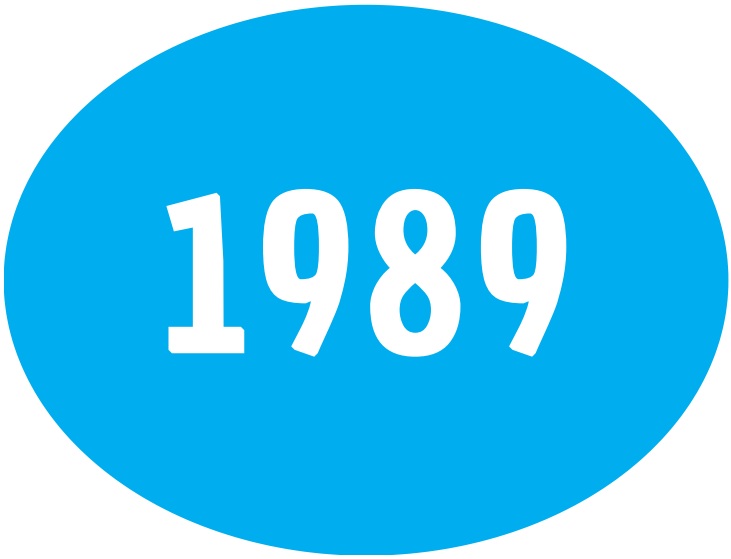

1947


1948


1949


1959


1984


1989


1994


2007


2010


2016


2021


2022


2026