

Resource Bank

ABOUT UNICEF

UNICEF is the **United Nations Children's Fund**. We help protect the rights of every child, everywhere, and support the most disadvantaged children and adolescents around the world. UNICEF supports child health and nutrition, safe water and sanitation, quality education and skill building, HIV prevention and treatment for mothers and babies, and the protection of children and adolescents from violence and exploitation.

Across more than 190 countries and territories, UNICEF works to protect the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged and those hardest to reach.

Before, during and after humanitarian emergencies, UNICEF is on the ground, bringing life-saving help and hope to children and families.

UNICEF works in Canada to advance the rights and well-being of all children and youth.

We work with all levels of government, a range of organizations, young people and other influencers and champions to promote public policy that protects every child's right to a childhood. We also equip young people with the skills and knowledge needed to become powerful advocates in Canada.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

WHAT IS THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years. In 41 substantive articles, it establishes in international law that States Parties must ensure that all children – without discrimination in any form – benefit from special protection measures and assistance; have access to services such as education and health care; can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential; grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner.

HOW WAS IT DECIDED WHAT SHOULD GO INTO THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

The standards in the Convention on the Rights of the Child were negotiated by governments, non-governmental organizations, human rights advocates, lawyers, health specialists, social workers, educators, child development experts and religious leaders from all over the world, over a 10-year period. The result is a consensus document that takes into account the importance of tradition and cultural values for the protection and harmonious development of the child. It reflects the principal legal systems of the world and acknowledges the specific needs of developing countries.

HOW DOES THE CONVENTION PROTECT THESE RIGHTS?

It constitutes a common reference against which progress in meeting human rights standards for children can be assessed and results compared. Having agreed to meet the standards in the Convention, governments are obliged to bring their legislation, policy and practice into accordance with the standards in the Convention; to transform the standards into reality for all children; and to abstain from any action that may preclude the enjoyment of those rights or violate them. Governments are required to report periodically to a committee of independent experts on their progress to achieve all the rights.

HOW IS THE CONVENTION SPECIAL?

The Convention:

- Is in force in virtually the entire community of nations, thus providing a common ethical and legal framework to develop an agenda for children. At the same time, it constitutes a common reference against which progress may be assessed.
- Was the first time a formal commitment was made to ensure the realization of human rights and monitor progress on the situation of children.
- Indicates that children's rights are human rights. Children's rights are not special rights, but rather the fundamental rights inherent to the human dignity of all people, including children. Children's rights can no longer be perceived as an option, as a question of favour or kindness to children or as an expression of charity. They generate obligations and responsibilities that we all must honour and respect.
- Is a reference for many organizations working with and for children – including NGOs and organizations within the UN system.
- Reaffirms that all rights are important and essential for the full development of the child and that addressing each and every child is important.
- Reaffirms the notion of State accountability for the realization of human rights and the values of transparency and public scrutiny that are associated with it.
- Promotes an international system of solidarity designed to achieve the realization of children's rights. Using the Convention's reporting process as a reference, donor countries are required to provide assistance in areas where particular needs have been identified; recipient countries are required to direct overseas development assistance (ODA) to that end too.
- Highlights and defends the family's role in children's lives.

HOW DOES UNICEF USE THE CONVENTION?

UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund. We are the UN organization mandated to protect the rights of every child, everywhere, especially the most disadvantaged, and we are the only organization specifically named in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a source of expert assistance and advice. The Convention provides us with guidance as to the areas to be assessed and addressed and is a tool to measure the progress achieved in those areas. In addition to maintaining a focus on child survival and development, we must consider the situation of all children, analyze the economic and social environment, develop partnerships to strengthen the response (including the participation of children themselves), support interventions on the basis of non-discrimination and act in the best interests of the child.



Sustainable Development Goals / Global Goals

WHAT ARE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS / GLOBAL GOALS?

In 2015, leaders from the 193 countries of the United Nations met to discuss the world's problems and agreed on a plan to tackle them by the year 2030. They named this plan the Sustainable Development Goals — commonly known as the Global Goals. The 17 Goals in turn hold 169 targets and 230 indicators. These new goals build on the Millennium Development Goals' (MDG) original commitment to helping children in terms of poverty, nutrition, health, education, water and sanitation, and gender equality. The Global Goals not only aim to end extreme poverty and hunger, they're also designed to provide lifelong education for all, protect the planet and promote peaceful and inclusive societies - and include new goals and targets on protecting children from violence, combating climate change and reducing inequality.

HOW ARE THE GLOBAL GOALS DIFFERENT FROM THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDG)?

The 17 Global Goals and their 169 targets are broader in scope and go further than the MDGs by addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. The goals cover the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

Building on the success and momentum of the MDGs, the new global goals cover more ground, with ambitions to address inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, oceans, ecosystems, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice.

The new Goals are universal and apply to all countries, whereas the MDGs were intended for action in developing countries only.

WHAT DO THE SDGS MEAN FOR UNICEF?

The SDGs are central to UNICEF's work for children. We help advance 12 of the 17 goals—more than any other development or humanitarian agency. We also lead or co-lead global tracking for 19 measures of children's well-being. This means we help countries collect and use reliable data to see where children are doing well and where more support is needed. The SDGs are built into all of our programs and our global plan, which guides our work in more than 190 countries and territories.

HOW ARE THE SDGS AND THE CRC CONNECTED?

The CRC explains the rights every child has and what governments must do to protect them. The SDGs are a global plan to improve people's lives and protect the planet by 2030. Many of the goals—such as ending poverty and improving health, education and equality—help make children's rights a reality.



In short, protecting children's rights helps achieve the SDGs, and progress on the SDGs helps children enjoy their rights. Children should also have opportunities to share their views and take part in decisions and actions that affect them.

Learn more through [UNICEF's detailed mapping of the articles of the CRC to the SDGs goals and targets.](#)

UNICEF Canada Campus Clubs

UNICEF Canada Campus Clubs empower students to take action on issues that matter. Through advocacy, fundraising, education, and community engagement, students develop leadership skills while helping to advance children's rights locally and globally.

WHY START A CAMPUS CLUB?

- **Build student leadership:** Students gain hands-on experience in teamwork, public speaking, event planning, advocacy, and project management.
- **Bring global issues into the classroom:** Clubs connect students to child rights, global citizenship, humanitarian issues, and youth-led civic engagement.
- **Create meaningful impact:** Students organize awareness campaigns, fundraisers, National Child Day activities, guest speaker events, and community projects.

AT A GLANCE

- 78+ active clubs
- 3,700+ youth participants
- 9 Provinces Represented

Across Canada, young leaders are using their voices to raise awareness, advocate for children, and make a difference in their communities.

WHAT UNICEF CANADA PROVIDES:

- Dedicated support from UNICEF Canada's Youth Programs Team
- Club guides and ready-to-use resources
- Fundraising and campaign toolkits
- Access to national youth engagement opportunities
- Connections with student leaders from across Canada

WHO CAN START A CLUB?

Any Ontario high school or post-secondary institution can start a UNICEF Canada Campus Club. All you need is:

- A small group of passionate students ages 13-24
- A staff advisor (for high schools)
- School approval

No previous experience is required. UNICEF Canada provides the resources and support needed to help students succeed.

