

What's Your ZERO?

GRADES 7–12

unicef
united states fund

TEACHunicef

About
This
Lesson

Overview

In 2012 the U.S. Fund for UNICEF launched *Believe in ZERO*, a national campaign to achieve ZERO preventable child deaths globally and provide every child with the opportunity to survive and thrive. In this lesson, students view the campaign PSA and explore what it takes for seemingly impossible ideas (like Believe in ZERO) to become possible. They learn about the work of UNICEF, analyze child mortality rates, and identify problems that they would like to see eliminated in their community, nation, or on a global level. Students then create an action plan to address one of the priorities they identified and in doing so become part of the global movement to achieve ZERO.

Objectives

Students will:

- Reflect on the human values that contribute to the attainment of large goals
- Learn about the work of UNICEF and global efforts to protect, develop, and save the lives of children
- Analyze changes in child mortality rates over recent decades
- Identify global problems and develop action plans to address them

Materials

- Chart paper and markers
- Computer and Internet access
- Screen and LCD projector or interactive whiteboard

Advance Setup

- Chart the quote in step #11
- Test the videos in steps #2 and 4
- Prepare Handouts 1-3 for projection or distribution

Time

One 45-minute period

Grade Level

Grades 7–12

Vocabulary

- advocate
- conviction
- determination
- development
- exploited
- humanitarian
- immunization
- mortality rate
- potential
- preventable child deaths
- PSA
- trafficking
- unwavering

We want to hear your students' ideas about *Believe in ZERO* and what they are doing to create a better world for all children. Please send copies of student essays and other creative work to TeachUNICEF@unicefusa.org. Some of their work will be featured on TeachUNICEF.org in order to inspire a national dialogue about *Believe in ZERO*. We invite you and your students to join us!

Directions

1. Either for homework or in class as a pre-lesson exercise, have students do some brief free-writing in response to the following quote. Ask them to consider what person or event this quote brings to mind, and how it applies to their own lives.

Before anything unimaginable can become real, there must be a believer. Someone who believes with unwavering determination. Someone whose conviction is so powerful that other people start to believe, too – more and more, until finally a seemingly impossible idea becomes possible.

After students share their thoughts, brainstorm and chart examples of “believers” who have achieved important goals (e.g., Nelson Mandela/elimination of apartheid; Eleanor Roosevelt/ Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Jonas Salk/polio vaccine; etc.). Discuss how these “believers” made the “impossible become possible.”

2. Tell students that you’d like to show them a brief PSA that explores the idea of believing in a dream. Play *Believe in ZERO* (www.unicefusa.org/about/believe-in-zero/watch) and discuss using the following questions:
 - The video talks about a “place for believers.” What kinds of environments or conditions do you think inspire people to “dream impossible things”?
 - Regarding the examples in the PSA (aviation, women’s rights, moon landing), what do you think made these ideas a reality? What specifically did it take (e.g., education, money, research, etc.)?
 - What was your reaction to the boy when he stepped onto the podium and announced his dream?
3. Project or distribute *Handout 1: UNICEF Believe in ZERO Poster* and ask for a volunteer to read it aloud. Tell students that currently nearly 7 million children under the age of five die each year around the world (that’s 19,000 every day). Ask them how they would compare the boy’s dream of zero preventable child deaths with the other dreams portrayed in the PSA. Ask if they think his dream is achievable and why, or why not.
4. Ask students if they are familiar with U.S. Fund for UNICEF, the organization behind the *Believe in ZERO* PSA. Allow them to share what they know, and use the following information to help clarify what UNICEF does:

UNICEF fights for the survival, protection, and development of children; to help children meet their basic needs; and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. UNICEF does this by working in areas such as immunization and health, education, water and sanitation, nutrition, and disaster relief. Working in over 190 countries, UNICEF has saved more young lives than any other humanitarian organization.

OPTIONAL: Play the *Believe in ZERO* video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAqOli1gLzk (2:52), which provides a brief overview of UNICEF’s work.

5. Project or distribute *Handout 2: Global Under-Five Mortality Rate Since 1990*, and review with the class. Ask students if they are surprised by these figures and how this graph influences their answer to the question discussed in step #3 (whether or not the dream of zero preventable child deaths is attainable).

6. Post a sheet of chart paper and write “What is Your ZERO?” in bold letters in the middle. Point out that the UNICEF poster identifies a number of goals or ZEROS – ZERO starving children, ZERO exploited children, ZERO preventable child deaths. Tell students that you’d like them to consider other ZEROS, and to discuss which are most urgent from their perspective.
7. Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students, and have each group select a recorder. Instruct groups to brainstorm and list problems they would like to see eliminated in their community, nation, or on a global level. When they are done, have the recorders write their group’s ideas on the “What is Your ZERO?” chart. Reconvene the class and discuss which issues came up most often and why.
8. For homework, assign students to write an essay (or create a poem, short video, or piece of art) in response to the question, “What is Your ZERO?” Direct them to outline their vision for a world without the problem they selected (e.g., poverty, hunger, homelessness, lack of education, etc.).
9. In class, create a bulletin board or other display of student work and have volunteers share their pieces. Work with students to identify one or two priority issues that the class would like to take action to address over the course of the school year. Work together to put a plan in place. Consult *Handout 3: 10 Ways to Take Action*, for ideas on how students can act on behalf of UNICEF as part of their plans.

Extension Activities

- Have students do reflective writing in response to the following prompt: “Describe a time when you accomplished something even though people around you said “no way” or didn’t believe you could achieve it. What did it take for you to attain your goal under those circumstances?” Ask for volunteers to share their writing, and highlight common themes and ways in which they overcame doubt in order to realize their aspirations. Challenge students to identify personal ZEROS (e.g., ZERO missed homework, ZERO fights, ZERO unnecessary absences, etc.) and to come up with a plan for achieving their goal.
- Delve deeper into the issue of child mortality by having students analyze some of the information found at www.childinfo.org/mortality.html (see *Levels and Trends in Child Mortality, Report 2012* and *Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed – Progress Report 2012*). Print several of the charts from these reports, assign a different one to small groups, and have each group create a graph illustrating what they have learned. Have students present their work to the whole class, and discuss patterns that emerge. Possible themes for graphs include the global under-five mortality rate since 1990, a comparison of the 2011 mortality rates by world regions, a comparison of the 2011 mortality rates between industrialized and developing nations, countries that have shown the greatest or least reduction in mortality rates, and the leading causes of death among children under five.
- Explore a case study of a disease that has been successfully reduced or eliminated (see, for example, “Whatever Happened to Polio?” at www.americanhistory.si.edu or “Smallpox is Dead” at www.pbs.org/wgbh/aso/databank/entries/dm79sp.html). Discuss what it took for this to happen (e.g., investment in scientific research, attention brought by major public figures, outbreak/public emergency as a catalyst, cooperation within and among countries, mass education, etc.) Make connections between advances toward the elimination of major diseases and the attainability of ZERO.

UNICEF Believe in ZERO Poster

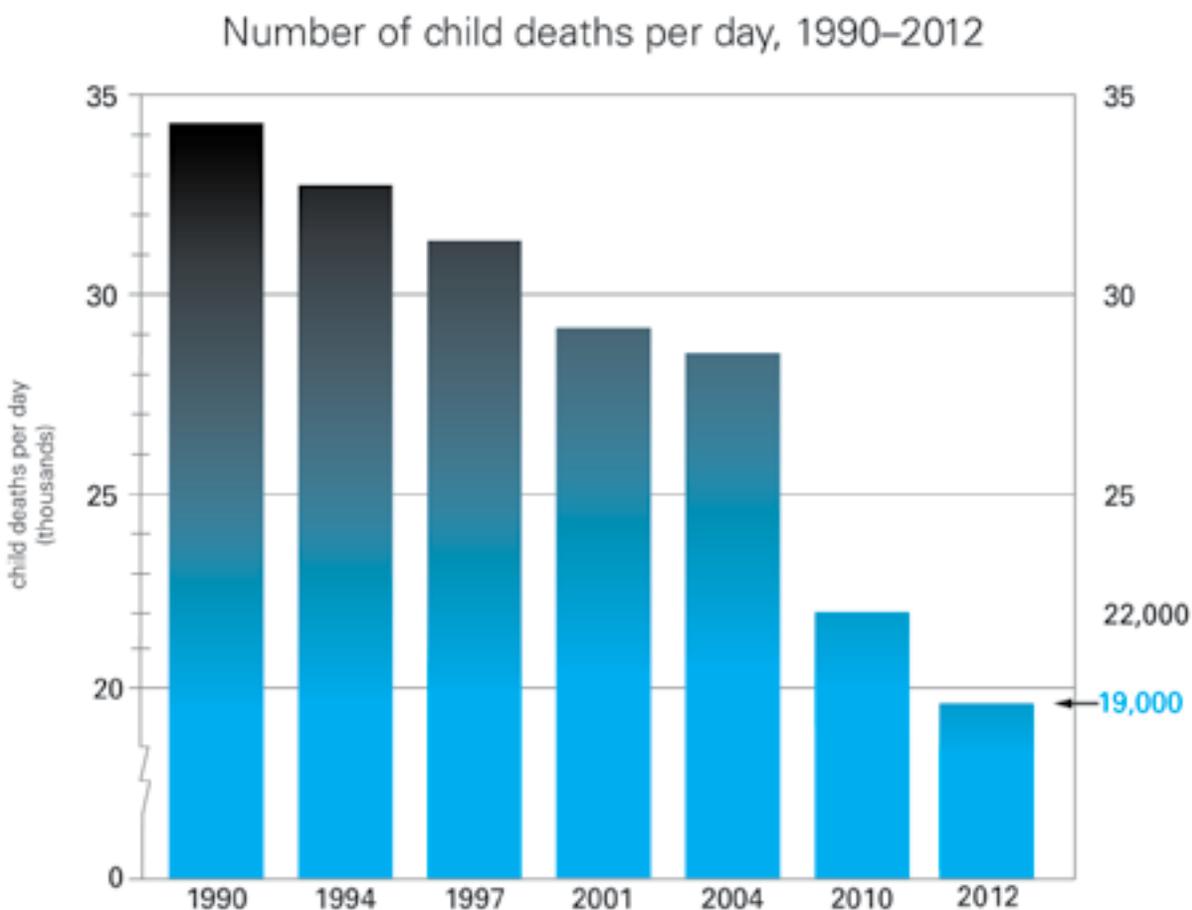
BEFORE ANYTHING UNIMAGINABLE
CAN BECOME REAL,
THERE MUST BE A BELIEVER.
SOMEONE WHO BELIEVES
WITH UNWAVERING DETERMINATION.
SOMEONE WHOSE CONVICTION
IS SO POWERFUL
THAT OTHER PEOPLE START TO BELIEVE, TOO
— MORE AND MORE, UNTIL FINALLY
A SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE IDEA
BECOMES POSSIBLE.
AN IDEA LIKE BELIEVE IN ZERO.
ZERO STARVING CHILDREN.
ZERO EXPLOITED CHILDREN.
ZERO PREVENTABLE CHILD DEATHS.
BELIEVE IN ZERO.

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Global Under-Five Mortality Rate Since 1990

There has been a 40% reduction in deaths among children under age five between 1990 and 2011. In 1990 nearly 12 million children per year died (33,000 per day) versus 6.9 million (19,000 per day) in 2011. About 14,000 fewer children died each day in 2011 than in 1990.¹



¹ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed* (New York: UNICEF, 2012), accessed October 1, 2012, http://www.unicef.org/media/files/APR_Progress_Report_2012_final.pdf.

10 Ways to Take Action

1 Volunteer. Share your time with UNICEF and join in our mission to save children's lives. Register online to gain access to the UNICEF Action Center, receive our monthly e-Newsletter updates and learn how to become a global citizen!

unicefusa.org/actioncenter

2 Advocate. Allow your voice to be heard in support of UNICEF's work. Send a letter to your elected senator and representative in support of UNICEF's annual Congressional contribution and other current UNICEF-supported legislation. Help educate your fellow citizens on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its importance to UNICEF's lifesaving work. Current campaigns also include "End Child Trafficking" and "Stop Child Marriage."

unicefusa.org/advocate

3 Get Connected! Become a UNICEF USA fan on Facebook and read daily updates and posts about UNICEF's work around the world, follow us on twitter @UNICEFUSA, read UNICEF's Fieldnotes Blog at fieldnotes.unicefusa.org, or check out our pictures at Flickr (unicefusa) and Instagram (@unicefusa).

4 Make a Donation. Give a lifesaving gift for children in need, through our Inspired Gifts program. Dedicate a gift, create a card, and we will then send that card to your friend or family member and send your gift to children that need it most.

inspiredgifts.org

5 TeachUNICEF. Use our UNICEF-focused resources designed for educators, afterschool instructors, and parents. Resources cover grades PK-12, are interdisciplinary, and align with national standards. All TeachUNICEF resources can be downloaded for free. teachunicef.org



6 Join a School Club. Join a rapidly growing grassroots movement of student-led groups that work with the U.S. Fund for UNICEF through the UNICEF High School Clubs and UNICEF Campus Initiative programs. Clubs partner with the U.S. Fund for UNICEF to educate, advocate, and fundraise in their local community or on their college campus. These students have a powerful role to play in reaching UNICEF's goal of zero preventable child deaths. [unicefusa.org/highschool](https://www.unicefusa.org/highschool) and [unicefusa.org/campusinitiative](https://www.unicefusa.org/campusinitiative).

7 Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF. Whether you're a kid, a parent, a teacher, or an individual supporter, there are so many ways to get involved! You can support Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF by carrying the collection box door-to-door, hosting a Halloween party or event, or by donating online. [trickortreatforunicef.org](https://www.trickortreatforunicef.org)

8 UNICEF Tap Project. Support UNICEF's efforts to bring clean and accessible water to millions of children around the world. With \$1, UNICEF can provide one child access to safe, clean water for 40 days. Volunteers conduct local fundraising events and awareness activities. Thousands of students and volunteers, along with corporate, community, celebrity, and government supporters have made the campaign a powerful national movement. [uniceftapproject.org](https://www.uniceftapproject.org)

9 Team UNICEF. Whether you are running in the ING New York City Marathon, the LA Marathon or participating in any other run, walk or bike-a-thon, you can help by joining Team UNICEF. Be part of our winning team — make zero your finish line. [unicefusa.org/teamunicef](https://www.unicefusa.org/teamunicef)

10 End Trafficking. Join us in the fight to end this form of exploitation and abuse. Whether you are a student, educator, artist, or athlete, you can do something to combat human trafficking here in the United States and around the world. Help us work towards a day when zero children are trafficked. Get involved by watching the film *Not My Life*. [unicefusa.org/endtrafficking](https://www.unicefusa.org/endtrafficking)

