

UNICEF Photo of the Year – Previous Award Winners



2022

First Prize

Eduardo Soteras, AFP, Argentina

Argentinian photographer Eduardo Soteras has been documenting the situation of children in Tigray since 2020. Although destroyed, an elementary school library in Ethiopia's Tigray region is where two children have taken refuge in books.

Second Prize

Ron Haviv, Agency VII, USA

I Once Had a Home is the title of a photo series by US photographer Ron Haviv, taken in Ukraine. His pictures show people who have to flee and bid their homes and friends farewell. And they show basements and metro stations where children are born. Where they play and learn.

Third Prize

Daniel Pilar, laif Agency, Germany

The photo series by German photographer Daniel Pilar accompanies schoolgirls in a secret girls' school in the Afghan capital Kabul.

2021

First Prize

Supratim Bhattacharjee, India

A severe cyclone takes eleven-year-old Pallavi's home. Indian photographer Supratim Bhattacharjee documents the severe consequences of climate change for children in India's Sundarbans.

Second Prize

Sourav Das, India

While schools remained closed due to Corona, a dedicated teacher in India moved classes outdoors. Indian photographer Sourav Das captured scenes from everyday life at this unusual village school.

Third Prize

Younes Mohammas, MEI Agency, Iraq

Iraqi photographer Younes Mohammad has portrayed children of war-wounded fathers. The pictures show the great strength of the boys and girls to deal with the fate of their families and to accept the disability of their fathers.

2020

First Prize

Angelos Tzortzinis, AFP, Greece

In September 2020 a fire destroyed the refugee camp Moria on the Greek island of Lesbos. Among the many pictures of this inferno, the most impressive images of children's suffering were taken by Greek photographer Angelos Tzotzinis.

Second Prize

Supratim Bhattacharjee, India

The air and drinking water are polluted, asthma, tuberculosis and skin diseases are widespread: In the Jharia coal fields in India, children must work, too. The Indian photographer Supratim Bhattacharjee captured their misery.

Third Prize

Evgeny Makarov, Agentur Focus, Germany/Russia

Violence and drugs are part of children's everyday life in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro. However, a ballet school was opened as an alternative. The German-Russian photographer Evgeny Makarov accompanied the ballet students through the favela.

2019

First Prize

Hartmut Schwarzbach, Argus Photo Agency, Germany

The harbor of Manila's Tondo district: here, the children make a living by fishing plastic bottles out of the bay's polluted water. Grinding poverty, child labor and oceans overflowing with garbage: In his haunting photos of Tondo, Schwarzbach portrays the convergence of three different disasters.

Second Prize

Andrew Quilty, Agence VU, Australia

Soldiers wounded in war are often given medals for bravery. Wounded children, if they are lucky, are given prostheses. Andrew Quilty shows in this disturbing image seven Afghan children from a remote village in the district of Surkh Rod.

Third Prize

Antonio Aragón Renuncio, Freelance Photographer, Spain

Exhaustion is written all over his face: For this boy, gold is not a promise - it's a scourge. Antonio Aragón Renuncio documented the hardships of Burkina Faso's gold-seeking children – and followed them even to the cemeteries where so many of them now lie.

2018

First Prize

Antonio Aragón Renuncio, Freelance Photographer, Spain

A portrait of a boy with leg orthosis, photographed during one of Renuncios regular visits to the "Saint Louis Orione Center" in Bambouaka, Togo. About 70 boys and girls have found a safe home there and receive the medical care they need.

Second Prize

Turjoy Chowdhury, Freelance Photographer, Bangladesh

Stateless children, born whilst fleeing their homes, with no birth certificate. Dhaka-based photographer Chowdhury took pictures of babies, one day, one week, three months old, born to parents from Myanmar.

Third Prize

Rina Castelnovo, Freelance Photographer, Israel/Palestine

His name is Muhi. He was born in 2009 in the Gaza Strip, as the son of a Hamas activist. Muhi suffers from a rare autoimmune disease that could not be treated in Gaza.

2017

First Prize

Muhammed Muheisen, Freelance Photographer, Jordan

Zahra's face. The face of a five-year-old Syrian girl in a refugee camp in Jordan. In 2015, Zahra's parents fled the war in Syria with her and seven other children.

Second Prize

K.M. Asad, Zuma Press, Bangladesh

Asad captured a tranquil moment of a Rohingya refugee and her child arriving on the beach of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh. Thousands have crossed the border on foot or by boat.

Third Prize

Kevin Frayer, Getty Images, Canada

It was on September 20, 2017 when aid transports arrived at a Rohingya refugee camp near the Bay of Bengal.

2016

First Prize

Arez Ghaderi, Freelance Photographer, Iran

His reportage captures a brave smile, maybe even a moment of real joy. It is the resilience, the radiance of a girl in an Iranian garbage dump.

Second Prize

Ali Nouraldin, laif Agency, Palestine

Ali Nouraldin captured a moment of enchantment during a lengthy stay in Idomeni. Volunteers have improvised an open-air cinema to entertain the children with movies.

Third Prize

Mohammed Badra, epa (European Photopress Agency), Syria

The war changed Badra: he had to witness it first-hand, he provided first aid for the Red Crescent – the sister organization of the Red Cross – and he became involved with the psychological support of victims.

2015

First Prize

Georgi Licovski, epa (European Pressphoto Agency), Macedonia

His reportage depicts the situation of refugees at the border between Greece and Macedonia.

Second Prize

Magnus Wennman, Aftonbladet, Sweden

Wennman traveled around from Jordan up to his home country of Sweden for a photo documentary he simply calls "Where the children sleep".

Third Prize

Heidi Levine, Sipa Press, France

"Healing and Resilience in Gaza" is the title of US photographer Heidi Levine's photo series.

2014

First Prize

Insa Hagemann / Stefan Finger, laif Agency, Germany

Their reportage on the effects of sextourism in the Philippines gives an insight in the situation of children whose fathers live abroad.

Second Prize

Christian Werner, laif Agency, Germany

For his reportage on internally displaced people from Shinghai district, Iraq.

Third Prize

Brent Stirton, Getty Images, South Africa

for his reportage "Before and after eye surgery" on children with congenital cataract blindness in India.

2013

Winner

Niclas Hammarström, Kontinent, Sweden

His photo reportage captures the life of the children in Aleppo caught between the frontlines.

2012

First Prize

Alessio Romenzi, Agentur Corbis Images, Italy

The winning picture shows a girl waiting for medical examination at a hospital in Aleppo, Syria. The camera captures the fear in her eyes as she looks at a man holding a Kalashnikov.

Second Prize

Abhijit Nandi, Freelance Photographer, India

In a long-term photo project, the photographer documents the many different forms of child labor in his home country.

Third Prize

Andrea Gjestvang, Agentur Moment, Norwegian

The third prize was awarded to Norwegian photographer Andrea Gjestvang for her work with the victims of the shooting on Utøya Island.

Forth Prize

Laerke Posselt, Agentur Moment, Dänemark

For her look behind the scenes of beauty pageants for toddlers in the USA.

2011

First Prize

Kai Löffelbein, Student, University of Applied Sciences and Arts, Hannover, Germany

For his photo of a boy at the infamous toxic waste dump Agbogbloshie, near Ghana's capital Accra. Surrounded by highly toxic fumes and electronic waste from Western countries, the boy is lifting the remnants of a monitor above his head.

Second Prize

JM Lopez, Freelance Photographer, Spain

With his photo JM Lopez documents the impact of severe malnutrition in Eastern Guatemala on this and future generations. In Guatemala, one million children suffer from hunger.

Third Prize

Mary F. Calvert, Zuma Press, USA

The competition's third prize has been awarded to American photographer Mary F. Calvert for her work in Nigeria. Her picture shows children being vaccinated against polio in the northern state of Kano.

2010

First Prize

Ed Kashi, Agency VII, USA

For his photo of the 9-year-old Nguyen Thi Ly from the Vietnamese city of Da Nang. Her face is marked by the toxic legacy of a war that ended 35 years ago. Many Vietnamese have suffered genetic damage from exposure to the defoliant Agent Orange.

Second Prize

Majid Saeedi, Getty Images, Iran

His photos deal with the effect of war on children. Majid Saeedi accompanied girls and boy in Afghanistan who returned with their families from Pakistan. The awarded picture shows the 8-year-old Akram who lost his hands and arms because of severe burns. Akram has tried to make some money by collecting scrap on a garbage dump in Peshawar and has accidentally touched a non-insulated cable.

Third Prize

GMB Akash, Panos Pictures, Bangladesh

His photo draws attention to the plight of child prostitutes in Bangladesh who suffer severe health damage. 20-year-old Yasmin has a puffy face because of the steroid. She has lived in this brothel since she was a child – just like her mother, who worked here as a prostitute for 30 years.

2009

First Prize

Johan Bävman, Freelance Photographer / Moment, Sweden

For his photo of two schoolgirls playing in their classroom at a school in Northern Tanzania. One of the girls is the ten-year-old Selina suffering from albinism. The photo is part of the series “Albino – In the shadow of the sun”.

Second Prize

Milan Jaroš, Freelance Photographer / Respekt, Czech Republic

His photo shows 5-year-old autistic Adélka from the Czech capital, Prague. She attends a kindergarten that was especially designed for the needs of autistic children.

Third Prize

Edwin Koo, Zuma Press, Singapore

His photo was taken in the Pakistani refugee camp Sheikh Yasin. It is tea time and the children are waiting in line with their teapots to get some of Pakistan’s national beverage.

2008

First Prize

Alice Smeets, Out of Focus, Belgium

Her winning picture shows a girl in the largest slum in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital. Although she has to live between dirt and rubbish, the girl is wearing a clean white dress with matching ribbons in her hair whilst walking barefoot through the mud.

Second Prize

Oded Bality, Associated Press (AP), Israel

His photo was taken 10 days after the catastrophic earthquake in the Chinese province of Sichuan on 12th May 2008, in which 70,000 people lost their lives.

Third Prize

Balazs Gardi, VII Network, Alexia Foundation, Hungary

For his photo of a man in the north west of Afghanistan who is holding an injured child in his arms. Balazs Gardi calls the series that he took in Korengal valley in the Kunar province, 'Collateral Damage'.

2007

First Prize

Stephanie Sinclair, VII Network, USA

Her winning picture is one of a series of photos about child marriages in Afghanistan, Nepal and Ethiopia. The photo shows a wedding couple in Afghanistan who could not be more opposite. The groom, Mohammed, looks much older than his 40 years. The bride, Ghulam, is still a child; she just turned 11.

Second Prize

G M B Akash, Free Lance Photographer, Panos Pictures, Bangladesh

His photo shows the harsh life that most of the children lead in his home country. The face of a boy of about 12 years shows the pride he takes in his strength, although the work in the brickyard is far too physically difficult for a child of his age.

Third Prize

Hartmut Schwarzbach, Germany, Argus

He photographed the young girl Annalyn celebrating her ninth birthday. On the picture, she is happily jumping on a red armchair that she had found on the garbage dump near the Philippine capital of Manila. Annalyn is chronically malnourished and thus too skinny and small for her age.

2006

First Prize

Jan Grarup, Politiken/Noor, Denmark

His photo shows the five-year-old Rahila about three weeks after the earthquake in Muzaffarabad, the provincial capital of Pakistani Kashmir. She was one of the many seriously injured girls and boys in the children's ward at the local hospital.

Second Prize

Shehzad Noorani, Free Lance Photographer, USA

Her photo shows the eight-year-old Hajira who is living in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Hajira cleans between 1,000 and 3,000 small carbon rods, which she cuts out of the old batteries. She is paid less than ten cents per day.

Third Prize

Hanna Polak, Free Lance Photographer, Poland

Her photos show homeless children in Moscow, living under the city in sewage tunnels and district heating pipes.

2005

First Prize

David Gillanders, Free Lance Photographer, Scotland

His photo shows a street child in Odessa. Yana made her way from Moldova, the poorest country in Eastern Europe, to the Ukrainian city. She died Christmas 2004 addicted to drugs and infected with the HI virus. She was only 13 years old.

Second Prize

Maurício Lima, Agence France Press (AFP), Brasil

His photo shows the 12-year-old Ayad who suffered severe burns during the war against Iraq.

Third Prize

Frida Hedberg, pressens bild, Sweden

She photographed a school party in the small village of Äspered near Gothenburg and titled the awarded photo „Boys and Girls“.

2004

First Prize

Marcus Bleasdale, VII, UK

His photo shows a girl and her mother who were expelled from their village by the Djanjawid militia in Sudan. Their house had been burned down. The face of the girl reflects the whole tragedy of the refugee crisis in the Sudanese Region Darfur.

Second Prize

Abir Abdullah, EPA, Bangladesh

In his photo series, Abdulla focuses on the devastating impact of recurring floods in Bangladesh. The photo awarded with the second price shows the dead body of six-year-old child in the ruins of a collapsed house.

Third Prize

Alfredo D'Amato, Panos Pictures, Italy

In his photo, D'Amato tells the story of a Roma-girl in Rumania who lives with her grandmother in a wooden hut built on a desiccated lake. The two earn their living with collecting iron, copper and aluminium which they try to sell. Officially, the girl does not exist, since she had never been registered after her birth.

2003

First Prize

Don Bartletti, LA Times, USA

His photo shows a boy from Honduras on his way to the USA – as a stowaway on the roof of a freight train. It is a part of the series “The Children left behind” and documents the dangerous odyssey of children and juveniles from Latin America

Second Prize

Felicia Webb, Free Lance Photographer, UK

Her photograph of children in material affluence: the obese siblings Jonathan (14) and Yomara (9) while eating at a fast food restaurant in the US State of Texas. “Generation XL” reports about children who suffer under severe damage of health, caused by their extreme overweight.

Third Prize

Brent Stirton, Getty Images, UK

He received the award for his extraordinary portrait of a 12-year-old former “bush wife” from Sierra Leone. Her chest was burned with battery acid as a punishment.

2002

First Prize

Jan Grarup, Politiken/Noor, Denmark

Serie: Forgotten victims of an unknown war. A project about children fleeing from the civil war in their native country Liberia. On the award-winning photo, they are asking for permits to pass through to a refugee camp in Sierra Leone.

Second Prize

Wolfgang Müller, Free Lance Photographer, Ostkreuz Germany

A sensitive portrait of a girl from St. Petersburg living in the streets. This picture is part of a series of photos with the title “Carat. Sky over St. Petersburg”, on children living in the streets of the Russian metropolis.

Third Prize

Stuart Freedman, Network Photographers, UK

A Hutu child carries water to the makeshift shelter where his family is forced to live. The image belongs to a project of “Politics and Hunger” for which he already photographed in several countries.

2001

First Prize

Meredith Davenport, Free Lance Photojournalist, NY/ USA

Photo: “Siviani on the couch”. A project about children of banana workers in Costa Rica whose parents were exposed to large amounts of pesticides.

Second Prize

Jan Grarup, Rapho, Denmark

For a photo from the series on the everyday life of Palestinian children in Ramallah in the Westbank. The photo shows boys with machine guns during a death procession. The procession was organised by the PLO-supporting Fatah-movement.

Third Prize

Vincent Kohlbecher, Germany

His photo shows two children living on the street and is part of a photo series on street children in Bukarest/Romania.

2000

First Prize

Matias Costa, Free Lance Photographer, Spain

Costas photographs illustrate in 2000 the everyday life of Rwandan children and adolescents, who lost their families in the east African country during the genocide in 1994.

Second Prize

Geert van Kesteren, Free Lance Photographer, Netherlands

A picture of five AIDS orphans, who are lying closely snuggled up next to their aunt in a dark hut. This photograph stems from a series reporting on "AIDS in Sambia".

Third Prize

Prakash Singh, Agence France Press (AFP), India

His photograph shows a small boy in New Delhi's traffic, sitting in front of a tree on a traffic island, seeking shelter from the monsoon rain.