



Education advocate Malala Yousafzai makes first trip to Africa

- Malala Fund announces first Africa initiative, more to come --
- Free the Children hosts Malala in Kenya, partners with Malala Fund --
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New York, NY (July 3, 2014) – On her first trip to Africa, education activist and Malala Fund co-founder Malala Yousafzai said she was inspired by the dreams and determination of the schoolgirls she met while learning about the many challenges they have overcome to obtain an education.

The 16-year-old spent several days speaking with girls from rural Kenyan communities about their passionate desire to go to school and the many obstacles they encounter, including discrimination, poverty, child labor and early marriage.

Malala said the moving stories the girls shared with her will strengthen her work as an education advocate. Malala visited Kenya recently on behalf of the [Malala Fund](#), a foundation that empowers girls through education.

“I came to Africa to raise awareness about the 58 million children not in primary school who face numerous barriers to education,” Malala said. “I was particularly inspired to meet young girls in Kenya who are so passionate about getting an education, building their future and the future of their country.”

Malala was hosted by Craig Kielburger, co-founder of Free The Children, a global organization of children engaged in service and development programs. Free The Children’s young supporters have raised funds to build more than 650 schools and schoolrooms throughout the developing world, while the organization works to topple the barriers to education.

On her visit, Malala also took up a shovel, mixed cement and laid bricks to help build Free The Children’s Oleleshwa All-Girls’ Secondary School, in rural South Narok, where the majority of girls do not attend high school.

Malala was also accompanied by her father, who is the Malala Fund’s chairman, along with its CEO, Shiza Shahid, who called on other school children to stand up for the rights of their peers.

The Malala Fund also financially contributed to the building of Oleleshwa All-Girls’ Secondary School, its first gift to Africa, because of Free The Children’s sustainable approach



to education and because of a common bond with young people from the United States, United Kingdom and Canada who support Free The Children.

“We feel honoured to have laid the foundation of the first school that the Malala Fund is building in Africa with Free the Children,” said Shahid. “This is the beginning of a deep commitment to Africa, and a testament to our belief that educating the children of the world holds the key to spurring progress and countering violence.”

Free The Children is currently building Oleleshwa All-Girls’ Secondary School, a boarding school which now accommodates 60 students but when complete will educate and board two hundred. These new students will join the 4,780 girls already enrolled in Free The Children primary and secondary schools across Kenya.

Free The Children’s innovative holistic development model, Adopt a Village, eliminates all barriers to education by providing schools, clean water projects, support for health care, agriculture and food security, and local small businesses, many run by women.

“We are so grateful to work together to build a school,” said Kielburger. “After the horrific kidnapping of the Nigerian girls, we are inspired by Malala’s compassion and leadership in ensuring education for girls on the African continent.”

While in Kenya, Malala spoke to a community gathering about the importance of educating girls and preventing early childhood marriage. When she finished speaking, the local children, in traditional Maasai dress, leapt to their feet and chanted “Malala” over and over. Finally, the community presented her with a goat, a sign of great respect in Maasai culture, in honor of her fight for girls’ education.

Malala’s visit with Free The Children followed her participation in the organization’s youth empowerment event We Day UK, when she addressed 12,000 people at London’s Wembley Arena along with Prince Harry, Sir Richard Branson and Jennifer Hudson. Click [here](#) to watch Malala’s speech at We Day UK and visit www.weday.com for more information on the event.

About The Malala Fund

The Malala Fund empowers girls through education to achieve their potential and be agents of positive change in their communities. Working in four countries, the Fund joins with local partners to invest in innovative solutions, advocate for quality education and amplify the voices of girls to demand change. For more information www.Malalafund.org

About Free The Children

Free The Children is an international charity and educational partner. Founded in 1995 by international activist Craig Kielburger, Free The Children believes in a world where young people are free to achieve their fullest potential, and empowers youth to remove barriers that prevent them from being active local and global citizens. The organization’s domestic programs – which include We Day, Free The Children’s signature youth empowerment event – educate, engage and empower 2.3 million youth across North America and UK



become engaged global citizens. Its international projects are implemented through a holistic and sustainable development model called Adopt a Village. Currently, Adopt a Village supports community development in eight countries; Kenya, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ecuador, Haiti, Nicaragua, rural China and India. Through its international programming, Free The Children has brought more than 650 schools and school rooms to youth and provided clean water, health care and sanitation to 1 million people around the world, freeing children and their families from the cycle of poverty.

The organization has received the World's Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, the Human Rights Award from the World Association of Non - Governmental Organizations, and has formed successful partnerships with leading school boards and Oprah's Angel Network. For more information, visit www.freethechildren.com.