For community screenings, panels, workshops, and college courses and seminars
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A Letter From Malala and Ziauddin Yousafzai

We hope you enjoy watching *He Named Me Malala*.

We are so happy to be able to share our story with you, and hope it will spark many conversations around the themes presented in the film through this discussion guide.

Many people tell us that our story is unique, but we do not see it that way. This is not the story of one girl but of more than 60 million girls around the world who do not go to school, prevented by poverty, violence, or social norms that do not value girls’ education.

While the film tells the story of our family and the difficult journey we have made from our home in Pakistan to our current home in the UK — we hope it sparks a much wider discussion and action to ensure every girl gets a quality secondary education.

You may wonder why we focus on girls’ secondary education, and it is this: Adolescent girls are the most likely to drop out of school or miss out on school altogether. They are often under great pressure to leave school to marry or take care of others. Many societies simply do not value girls’ education, so they do not invest in girls’ schools, and girls are not encouraged to continue their studies. Girls are particularly vulnerable in situations of conflict, which is why we work closely to support refugee girls and girls threatened by violence.

We believe that access to twelve years of free, safe, quality education for every girl benefits all society, not only girls. When girls are educated, they transform their own lives, and those of their families. Basic education enables them to survive but quality secondary education provides girls the wings to fly.

We hope that watching *He Named Me Malala* and using this discussion guide will encourage you to raise your voice for girls’ education. We all have a role to play — whether we are parents, teachers, or students.

Please stand #withMalala and show your support for the right to education. Every voice counts. At the end of this guide we will show how you can get more involved and suggest ways to encourage others to do so as well. You will also find more information on the Malala Fund website: www.malala.org.

With love and gratitude,

Malala & Ziauddin
Introduction to the Film

Malalai and Malala: Two Pashtun Heroines

He Named Me Malala, a documentary by award-winning filmmaker Davis Guggenheim, traces the life of Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani activist who was the victim of an assassination attempt because she spoke so passionately in support of girls’ education. The film speaks eloquently about the importance of raising one’s voice to speak out against injustice, about the interior peace that comes with forgiveness, about courage under immense pressure, about the importance of a beloved home and family. It profiles the closeness of a father and daughter who both assume enormous risks to fight for their beliefs. It shows that in a patriarchal society, even a young woman can have a lasting influence.

The film opens with a short animated sequence about an Afghan teenager, Malalai, a Pashtun heroine who died in 1880 in the Battle of Maiwand. The Pashtun are an ethnic group of more than 50 million who live in Afghanistan and Pakistan; they have long been renowned as determined fighters who defend their territory fiercely. In 1878, the British invaded Afghanistan for the second time, and in 1880, Afghan forces defended their homeland in the battle of Maiwand. Many Pashtun women played important roles on the battlefield, caring for the wounded and bringing water and spare weapons; Malalai, the teenage daughter of a shepherd from a nearby village, was among them. When the Afghan fighters’ morale was fading during the battle, Malalai seized a flag and encouraged them, turning the tide of battle. Although she was shot and killed, she was buried with honor and lived on as a revered Pashtun folk heroine.

Born in 1997 in Mingora, Pakistan, Malala is the oldest of three children. Her father, a teacher and a founder of a school, was determined to give her a good education, and she loved being in the classroom. Following her father’s example, when religious extremists began to suppress and destroy schools, Malala began to speak in defense of girls’ opportunities for education. She was threatened by the Taliban, a fundamentalist organization in Afghanistan and Pakistan that opposed secular education for girls. Despite the threats, she continued to blog, speak, and give interviews promoting her beliefs.
In 2012, her school bus was ambushed by the Taliban and she was shot in the head; two of her friends were also wounded. She was treated at a military hospital in Peshawar, Pakistan, and then in Birmingham, England. Though she was in critical condition and part of her skull had to be replaced, she survived. Malala and her family moved to England, where she attends school. The Malala Fund she established works to empower girls globally through education to achieve their potential and be agents of change in their communities. Malala’s awards include Pakistan’s National Youth Peace Prize (2011), now called the National Malala Peace Prize; the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice (2012); the Simone de Beauvoir Prize for international human rights work on behalf of women’s equality (2013); and the Nobel Peace Prize (2014).

This discussion guide gives you the opportunity to join Malala’s movement: learn about the status of girls’ education in the world today, discuss what you have read about girls’ education, explore resources to learn more, and seek ways to make a change in your own community and in the wider world.
About Pakistan

“We lived in a paradise.”
— Malala Yousafzai

Many of the events shown in He Named Me Malala take place in Malala’s home country of Pakistan, a nation of approximately 180 million people. For millennia, it has been a home to many civilizations, including Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Mongols, Arabs, Afghans, Sikhs, and Turks. Pakistan today is considered an Islamic state, but its history reflects a culturally complex society rich in ethnic diversity.

From 1858 until its independence, Pakistan was under direct English rule as a part of the British Indian Empire. When the British government pulled out in 1947, the empire split into two nations, India and Pakistan. Pakistan was itself divided into two areas—East Pakistan and West Pakistan—east and west of India. The eastern section, in a fierce war in 1971, broke away as the independent nation of Bangladesh. Today, the country of Pakistan is divided into four provinces (Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Sindh), as well as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas near Kashmir and the Islamabad Capital Territory. Pakistan has a democratic constitution, but power has shifted between the military and civilian authority and the country’s unity has been threatened by various regional and ethnic movements.

Malala’s home was in the Swat Valley, part of the northern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This area has a strong Buddhist heritage, in addition to its Islamic roots. The Swat Valley is only about a hundred miles northwest of the capital, Islamabad, but remains isolated because of its mountainous terrain. It is often referred to as the Switzerland of Asia, because of its snow-covered mountain peaks. In addition to natural beauty, the area is noted for historically important Buddhist sites, although many have been destroyed by the Taliban.

Why does Malala refer to the Swat Valley as “a paradise”? In addition to the natural beauty of the area, what factors made it a happy home for her?

When and why did her sense of the Swat Valley as a “paradise” fade?

Why do you think Malala wants to return there? Why doesn’t she go back? In her position, would you long to return home?
The Influence of Family

A new branch on the family tree

Malala comes from a remarkable family. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai, is a teacher who built his own school, starting with only $150. He has spoken out fearlessly many times in favor of girls’ education, even at the risk of his own life. He feels extremely close to his daughter, who shares his ideals and courage: “When she is there I am very much inspired, more confident, and bold.”

When Malala’s father learns that his daughter has entered the world, he loves her immediately. At one point, his cousin brings over a drawing of the family tree, a record that reflects the different value placed on male and female children. Ziauddin remarks: “It traced back for three hundred years. No woman was mentioned—only men were there. I took a pen, drew a line, and wrote ‘Malala.’” It is clear that he means to empower his daughter and sees her as the equal to a son.

Malala’s mother, Tor Pekai, had only one year of formal education as a child. A housewife who has endured years of fear for her husband’s safety, a brutal attack on her only daughter’s life, and a move to an entirely new country and lifestyle, she is, according to BBC reporter Abdul Hai Kakar, “the unseen force behind her husband and daughter’s courage and forthrightness.”

As Malala’s brother Kushal summed up his feelings in the film, “My mom is like the best mom, I think, ever.” Malala asks her mother when they are living in Great Britain:

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“Mom, are you happy?” Her mother misses their home in Swat and, crying by the window one night, she says: “I told the moon, you’re the only thing that is the same, but everything here is different.”

1. Why were no women mentioned on the family tree? Why did Ziauddin add Malala’s name? What does this imply about his goals for her?

2. Ziauddin Yousafzai has a bad stutter, but even as a boy he dared to speak out. What does this indicate about his character? What does it suggest about our own potential to pursue goals in spite of obstacles?

3. When Malala lies in her hospital bed in a coma, her father thinks that she will blame him for not stopping her, for not keeping her out of harm’s way. Would you let your daughter attend school if you knew about the danger of her being attacked? Why, or why not?

4. What new challenges did the family have to contend with when they moved from the Swat Valley of Pakistan to Great Britain? To what extent does your own home country welcome immigrants and help them adjust to a new life?

5. At many times in the film, Malala shows that she is a typical teenager. How does she get along with the other members of her family? How do they describe her?
Religious Extremism Comes to the Swat Valley

“I am afraid of no one.”
— Malala Yousafzai

The Taliban in Pakistan is not the same organization as the Taliban in Afghanistan; although there are similarities, they have different goals and strategies. The Afghan Taliban, for example, condemned the attack on a school in Peshawar in 2014 in which more than 130 children were killed. Extremists in Pakistan under Sufi Mohammed formed a movement (TNSM) with the goal of establishing strict Sharia law in the Swat Valley and, ultimately, in all of Pakistan. Sharia law (from the Arabic for “clear well-trodden path to water”) is a traditional Islamic legal system based on the Qur’an and the Hadith, the collection of sayings of the Prophet Mohammed. It governs many aspects of public and private behavior, including dress, worship, and sexual behavior. Some Islamic countries or groups enforce Sharia law with penalties ranging from prison terms to stonings, beheadings, and amputations.

Sufi Mohammed’s son-in-law, Mullah Fazlullah, had a radio channel that became popular by mixing in calls for an intensification of public piety with recipes and political talk. The TNSM took over the Swat Valley in 2008 after the Pakistani army withdrew from the area. The militants terrorized the region with beheadings, floggings, kidnappings, the destruction of schools, and public bonfires of computers, DVDs, and other modern items they object to, in their effort to counter Western influences and impose Sharia law.

How did extremists achieve control of the Swat Valley? According to the film, what do they believe? Who was Mullah Fazlullah (shown above)? Why were people willing to listen to him? What policies did he promote on his radio program?

Why did the Taliban oppose girls’ education? How did the actions of the Taliban affect Malala’s education and that of other girls in the Swat Valley?

Malala and her family think very differently about Islam from the Taliban. How does her understanding of Islam differ from that of the militants? According to her statement in the film, what are the teachings of Islam about education?

Why did Malala agree to write a blog for the BBC after another girl’s father said no? Why did Ziauddin let her do this? Why was it so important to the two of them to speak out? What risks did they take? Why?

What were the changes that took place due to Malala and her father speaking out? How did the assassination attempt become an international moment for every girl’s right to education?
The Global Status of Girls’ Secondary Education

“Even if I have nowhere to sit, and have to sit on the floor to get an education, I will do that.”
— Malala Yousafzai

Why is Malala’s cause so urgent?

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights established that education is a fundamental human right for all children, no matter who they are or where they live.

In 2000, the United Nations set out the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved within 15 years. Two of the goals were to achieve universal primary education and to promote gender equality, and the latter goal included Target 3A: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015. Despite major improvements in providing primary education to both boys and girls, secondary education for girls, the cause for which Malala almost gave her life, has lagged far behind.

Here are some recent findings from a study by the Brookings Institution3:

- The average girls’ enrollment rate in secondary school in the poorest countries is 25.9 percent, compared with 90 percent in high-income countries.

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The gender gap in education is much more pronounced in Africa, Southeast Asia, and conflict-affected parts of the Middle East than elsewhere.

National averages disguise even more extreme gaps resulting from income disparity, place of residence (rural or urban), disability, and ethno-linguistic difference. There are currently 80 countries that have failed to meet the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goal target of eliminating gender disparity in enrollment in secondary education by 2015. Thirty other countries have reached acceptable levels of enrollment but have a gender gap in actual academic achievement. The Millennium Development Goals have expired and have been replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals, which include these targets:

- Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education.
- Ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education.
- Ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.
- Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.4

Some factors that affect girls’ access to secondary education:

- Costs of education (including school fees, uniforms, transportation, and opportunity costs for students who might otherwise work to contribute to family income)
- Social taboos that prohibit girls from moving freely to school without chaperones or participating in a school that also has boys
- Overall lack of self-confidence and high aspirations among girls
- Failure of parents to appreciate the economic benefits of girls’ education
- The prevalence of early marriage and childbearing in some societies
- Fear of pervasive school-related violence or outright bans on female education
- Distance to available school facilities
- Crisis situations, such as war, natural disaster, and epidemic

What exactly does secondary education mean? Why is it so important?

How does one define quality in secondary education?

Consider the factors that impede girls’ education. What do you think can be done to mitigate each one?

Education is a basic human right. How can governments be made accountable to deliver on their obligation to make it a reality?

Why Education Is So Critical (I)

Education is a lifesaver—literally.

A few more statistics:

- The Center for Global Development reports: “Educated mothers are 50 percent more likely to immunize their children than mothers with no schooling.”

- A child born to a literate mother is 50 percent more likely to survive past the age of five.

- Over the past 40 years (particularly from 2000 to the present), women’s education has prevented more than four million child deaths.

Girls’ education improves family health, which in turn keeps girls in school longer, resulting in a positive cycle of family and community welfare.

Why is there such a clear correlation between education level and better health? Brainstorm as many explanations as you can. Which seem the most likely?

Locate statistics on the links between education achievement levels and health data such as child mortality, obesity rates, and life expectancy. What is the connection between education level and health in your own community?

Given these associations, why should women’s education be an important goal for men as well as for women?


Why Education Is So Critical (II)

“She’s not independent or free, because she’s not educated.”
— Malala Yousafzai

When Malala spoke these words about her mother, she could also have been speaking about the millions of girls whose education is brief or nonexistent. For the individual girl, education not only can open intellectual avenues, but also can provide greater employment opportunities, with a corresponding increase of personal freedom.

Education can also bring about a rise in family income. The World Bank has determined that an extra year of education enables a girl to earn up to 20 percent more as an adult and reinvest 90 percent of her income into her family. According to United Nations estimates, 171 million people could end their poverty by acquiring basic literacy skills.9

Full participation in a democracy is a function of literacy, as well. If women are to increase their voting power commensurate with their numbers, literacy is essential. For holding a significant political office, a secondary education is essential.

What economic factors might keep a family from sending their children, and particularly their daughters, to school? Why is this short-sighted? What policy changes might encourage greater school enrollment?

How connected are learning and earning in your community?

What do statistics show about the effect of additional diplomas and degrees on earnings power?

Why is basic literacy important for citizenship and civic participation?

There have been some remarkable women activists around the world who have spoken out in spite of having been denied an education themselves. Is a secondary education helpful or even necessary today if a woman is to participate fully in government, or if she is to be an advocate for social justice?


Reaching Around the World: The Malala Fund at Work

“In some parts of the world, students are going to school every day. It’s their normal life. But in other parts of the world, we are starving for education.... [I]t’s like a precious gift. It’s like a diamond.”

— Malala Yousafzai

In the film, Malala is shown working with groups of children from several parts of the world that are currently the focus for the efforts of The Malala Fund. In each place, the barriers to girls’ education are different, and so the solutions must be different as well. The next section of this guide looks at four places where the Malala Fund is at work to increase girls’ access to education.

Nigeria

Nigeria is the country with the dubious distinction of having the greatest percentage in the world of children out of school—8.7 million do not attend primary school and the figure is much higher when children missing from secondary school are included. Nearly 90 percent of those students out of school are in Northern Nigeria, where the Chibok schoolgirls were taken captive by the insurgent group Boko Haram in the spring of 2014.

Malala has visited the families of the kidnapped girls and called on then-President Goodluck Jonathan. The Malala Fund has provided 30 of the girls who escaped from Boko Haram with scholarships to complete secondary school, including school-related expenses and counseling services.

The Fund’s support for the Centre for Girls Education (CGE) provides scholarships for in-school girls, as well as safe space programs for in-school and out-of-school to improve their literacy and numeracy skills, build trusting relationships, and acquire critical life skills.

Why were these girls kidnapped? What recent information can you find about their status? What has been done to try to free them?

What steps should the government of Nigeria take to guarantee that school is a safe place for girls to learn?

Why did Malala meet with the Chibok parents? How is Malala using her voice to advocate for the girls in Nigeria? What effect did her presence there have?

Find out more about the social media campaign to free the Chibok girls. How effective is social media as a strategy for bringing about social or political change?

To learn more about the kidnapped Chibok girls, see the site “A World at School” at http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/category/chibok-girls.

The Syrian refugee crisis

As this guide is being prepared, the conflict in Syria has resulted in over 7.6 million internally displaced people and four million refugees, about half of whom are children. These children are often referred to as the lost generation. Many have missed or will miss years of schooling because they live in camps or are otherwise without resources. Today more than 2.6 million Syrian children are estimated to be out of school.

In 2009, Malala herself experienced a little of what it was like to be a refugee when she and her family found themselves to be “Internally Displaced Persons,” that is, refugees in their own country, to avoid risks from military action in the Swat Valley. Flight to avoid conflict substantially interrupts education.

According to the Malala Fund, for example, of the 6,500 school-age Syrian refugee children and youth in the Azraq refugee camp in Jordan, only half were enrolled in the camp’s school last year. And only 1,400 students (less than 22 percent) attended school regularly.

In 2015, the Malala Fund began supporting informal and alternative learning programs for girls and provided funding through the Kayany Foundation for an informal secondary school for 200 Syrian girl refugees.

What exactly is a refugee? Why might someone be forced to become a refugee?

The average number of years a refugee remains in that status is about 14. If that happened to you, what would you miss in that period of time?

What are some of the organizations helping refugees? What kinds of aid do they provide? How are they funded?

For additional reading about Syrian refugees, see http://childrenofsyria.info/.

Kenya

Less than 50 percent of girls in Kenya continue their education in secondary school; many of these girls are the first to go to school in their families. Others passionately desire an education, but there is no school available for them, espe-
cially in rural areas.

In the film, the viewer sees Malala and her father helping to build a school in Kenya. The Malala Fund is supporting NairoBits, an informal education program with a focus on information and communications technology. The fund also provides funding for Free the Children to increase girls’ access to secondary schools in rural Kenya.

How does the use of technology in learning differ around the world?

What are the positive results of introducing technology in developing countries? Are there any possible negative effects?

To learn more about schools in Kenya, see http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sites/gem-report/files/EDUCATION_IN_KENYA_A_FACT_SHEET.pdf.

Pakistan

According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 5.5 million primary school-age children are out of school in Pakistan, the third highest number of out-of-school children in the world. Girls account for 63 percent of these children. UNESCO estimates that 62 percent of the poorest girls in Pakistan have not had any primary education at all. According to the Malala Fund, poor girls are 16 times less likely to be in secondary school than boys from the wealthiest rural families.

The Malala Fund works to increase girls’ enrollment in the Swat Valley and has also provided funds for books, uniforms, and supplies destroyed by flooding in 2014. Although Malala herself cannot safely return to Pakistan at the present time, her work there continues.

How have cultural, economic, military, and political factors affected the likelihood of girls attending secondary school in Pakistan?

How would Pakistan change if as many girls were able to attend school as boys?

What Can You Do?

“There’s a moment when you have to decide whether to be silent or to stand up”

— Malala Yousafzai

Now that you’ve seen the film and learned about the issues, it’s time to take action: Stand up. Stand now. Stand #withMalala.

Just as Malala said in her 2014 Nobel Peace Prize speech, “I am not a lone voice, I am many,” the Malala Fund believes that anyone—of whatever age, gender, or location—can bring about sustainable change locally and globally. We all have a role to play. Every voice counts.

Raise your voice

• We are at the beginning of something: Stand #withMalala and join the movement of empowering all girls through education by signing #withMalala, our anthem, at Malala.org.

• Girls everywhere, including those displaced and affected by conflict, have the right to receive 12 years of primary and secondary education that is free, safe, and of high quality. Sign the petition at Malala.org/action demanding that world leaders fund, measure, and protect education for all girls.

• Write an op-ed or blog post for a local newspaper about why safe and quality secondary education for every girl matters. Find more resources at Malala.org/film.

Collaborate, learn, and spread the word

• Submit your original artwork raising awareness about this critical issue to the #withMalala curated online mural in partnership with Adobe’s Project 1324. This digital installation will provide a free, safe space to allow the power of creativity to shine a light on the importance of every girl having the right to a quality and safe education. Realize the power of your voice and creativity at Malala.org/action.

• Learn more about what you can do by accessing customized student and parent tool kits at Malala.org/film.

• Download the social press kit and spread the word about the film, the issue and ways to take action at Malala.org/film.

Donate

• You can support girls’ education projects around the world. Learn how you can be a champion for girls in Pakistan, Nigeria, and Kenya or help Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon and Jordan go back to school and learn safely. Make a gift to transform their world at Malala.org/donate.

• Your next birthday or special occasion could help support education projects for the girls around the world who need it the most. Read about unique fundraising ideas and get started at Malala.org/fundraise.
Resources for Study and Action

“One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen can change the world.”
— Malala Yousafzai

Girls’ education overview

Malala Fund — Beyond Basics: Making 12 Years of

Financing Upper Secondary Education: Unlocking 12

Brookings Report (www.malala.org/facts)

UN Girls’ Education Initiative (www.ungei.org)

GPE and UNGEI — Accelerating Secondary Education for

World Inequality Database on Education — http://www.education-inequalities.org/

UNESCO Institute for Statistics Country Profiles —
http://www.uis.unesco.org/DataCentre/Pages/regions.aspx

UNESCO Global Monitoring Report

Syria crisis and education

Save the Children — Futures Under Threat (http://www.savethechildren.de/fileadmin/Dokumente_Download/Downloadbereich/StC_Futures_Under_Threat_Syria.pdf)

UNHCR — Education Interrupted (http://www.unhcr.org/52aebff9.html)


Education in emergencies


Global Education Cluster — http://educationcluster.net/

We encourage you to host a screening and discussion of He Named Me Malala. Our hope is that the film will spark dialogue and action in communities across the world to ensure that every girl receives a free, quality, and safe secondary education.

International Day of the Girl (IDG) is a key moment each year for the entire girls’ rights community. Since 2012, the United Nations marks October 11 as the IDG and promotes girls’ human rights, highlights gender inequalities, and addresses the various forms of discrimination and abuse suffered by girls around the world.
This discussion guide for the film *He Named Me Malala* was written by Dr. Fred Mednick of Teachers Without Borders and Eileen Mattingly of Journeys in Film.

For a complete secondary school curriculum guide, see http://journeysinfilm.org/films/he-named-me-malala/ or http://www.malala.org/.