

Words on Fire: Poetry for Girls' Right to Education

Creative Action Toolkit Guide



creative action
INSTITUTE

Before you get started

INTRODUCTION

GOALS FOR USE OF THIS TOOLKIT

- Raise awareness about a girl's right to education and the positive impacts that result from providing a girl access to safe, quality secondary education.
- Empower girls with the tool of poetry to amplify their voice about a girl's right to education
- Join the Stand #withMalala campaign, and become part of a global movement working to educate policymakers and the public about the importance of investing in adolescent girls.

MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- Girls Education Fact Sheet
- Handouts:
 - Appendix A: Malala's Story
 - Appendix B: Girls Education Bingo
 - Appendix C: Words on Fire: Malala's Poem
 - Appendix D: Blank Poetry Template
 - Appendix E: Poetry Example by Aryeh Shell
- Pens
- Guidelines for #with Malala campaign:
<https://www.withmalala.org/about/guidelines>
- *Optional:* He Named Me Malala video and discussion guide (iTunes \$14.99/DVD \$19.99)

PREPARATION FOR USING THE TOOLKIT

Read the handouts and become familiar with the Malala Fund materials and #withMalala campaign guidelines before facilitating the activities in this toolkit so that you are prepared to answer questions and support the girls to submit their creative actions to the global #withMalala campaign for girls' rights to education. Fill out the Poetry Template beforehand to provide your own personal example!

STEPS

1. FRAME THE MOVEMENT

Introduce the topic of Girls' rights to an education and how it benefits all of society, not just girls. Discuss the reasons why it is important for the world to invest in girls having access to a safe, quality secondary education.

Talking points for facilitators:

Girls Education Facts (Girls Education Fact Sheet)

Today, more than 60 million girls around the world are not in school

- Almost a quarter of women aged 15 – 24 in developing countries today have never completed primary school
- The ability to go to school impacts a girl's entire future. Girls who attend and complete secondary school tend to have lower maternal and infant mortality rates, lower rates of HIV/AIDS and incomes that are 10-20% more than those who do not
- A girl's education – her full education – is a proven to be the best investment for policy-makers, communities and individuals

The Right to an Education

Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights

- Many international agreements recognize the right to education for all, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education and the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, among others.

Definitions (Facts Sheets 3 and 4)

What does “education” mean and what does it entail? You can explore these definitions and how they apply to your local context. According to international conventions, education includes:

- All levels of education – primary, secondary and higher education
 - *Define each one*
- Access to education
 - *What will support a girl to have access to an education?*
- High standard and quality education
 - *What does high standard and quality education mean?*
- The conditions under which education is imparted
 - *What kinds of conditions are necessary?*

2. REFLECT ON MALALA'S STORY

- Share the story of the world's youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Malala Yousafzai, and her global campaign to ensure that every girl has access to a quality education.
- Distribute copies of **Malala's Story** (Appendix A) and read out loud or in small groups. *Optional:* Watch the video “He Named Me Malala” and use the Discussion Guide for reflection.

Some possible discussion questions:

- Where is Pakistan?
- What is the Taliban? Why do they oppose girls' education?
- Malala once said, “I am afraid of no one.” Where do you think she got the courage to become a global education advocate for girls?
- What factors might prevent a girl from going to school? What can we do to change that?
- Share information about the Stand #with Malala campaign
 - <https://withmalala.org/about/guidelines>

3. GIRLS' EDUCATION BINGO

Girls' education brings high returns not just for income and economic growth, but in other crucial areas as well—including improving children's and women's survival rates and health, reducing population growth, protecting children's rights and delaying child marriage, empowering women in the home and in the workplace, and improving climate change adaptation.

On the Bingo card, you will find some of the societal benefits and impacts that girls' education provides written in **bold** – along with a question prompt for the girls' to discuss written in *italics*. Feel free to change the question prompts to be more specific or appropriate for your group.

- Print copies and hand out a **Girls' Education Bingo card** (Appendix B) and a pen to each girl.
- Ask the girls to read out loud what is written in bold in the different squares.
- Have the girls walk randomly through the room without bumping into anyone. (*Optional*: play music in the background). Their task is to seek out different partners and ask them a question that is written in italics inside one of the squares. Once their partner responds, they write their name and answer inside that square.
- Then they find a new partner and repeat the process with a new square.
- No names can be repeated on their card.
- The first person to fill in every square yells out loud, Bingo!
- That girl will stand in the center of a circle and receive a "Shower of Love" - for two minutes, everyone will say out loud all of the different things they admire and appreciate about her, such as "Fulana is really smart. She always helps out whenever she can. She is very trustworthy. I know I can count on Fulana as a friend when I need someone. Etc."
- Ask the girls to share out loud some of the responses they have for each square.

Discussion questions:

- What did you learn during this activity?
- Did anything surprise you?
- Why is it important to invest in girls' education?
- How can we share this message in our community?

4. POETRY ACTIVITY: WORDS OF FIRE

Introduce the power of poetry as a communication tool to express our thoughts and feelings. Some points to share:

- Poetry plays with language to connect words and ideas in new ways – which helps us to see and think about things from different perspectives.

- Poetry doesn't need to rhyme but a good poem has rhythm.
- Poetry helps us to remember and rewrite history by sharing our stories and the experience of those who have often been left out of official history (like women and girls).
- Poetry helps us to find our inner voice and desires.
- Poetry helps us to express our feelings in positive ways – especially our feelings of anger, grief, sadness, fear, and outrage.
- Poetry has the power to touch people's hearts and inspire them to change or take action.
- What else can poetry do?
- Share this quote: *"If you don't learn to write your own life story, someone else will write it for you."* Reflect on the meaning of this quote.
- Distribute and read **Malala's Poem: Words on Fire** out loud (Appendix C)

Discussion questions:

- How does this poem make you feel?
- What does this poem make you want to do?

Distribute the **Blank Poetry Template** (Appendix D), based on Malala's poem *Words of Fire*. Share your own as an example (See Appendix E for Aryeh's example).

- Give the girls time to fill in the blanks and write their own Words on Fire.
Optional: play soft music in the background
- Have the girls stand up and read their poems out loud. Encourage them to stand tall and project their voices! Make sure the girls listen and clap loudly for each other!

Discussion questions:

- What was it like to write your own poem? What did you discover about yourself?
- What inspired you from hearing the poems that your sisters wrote?
- How can we share these poems with the outer world?

Optional activities:

- Consider expanding on this lesson by having the girls create drawings, music, collages, or dance to accompany their poems.

5. PARTICIPATE AND BUILD THE MOVEMENT

Spread your Words on Fire

- Plan a community “spoken word” event for the girls to share their poems with the rest of the school or larger community.
- Consider adding background music or drumming to add rhythm to the poems, turn the poems into songs or use dance to augment or expand on the poems.
- Reach out to community radio stations for the girls to read their poems.
- Write, decorate and print out poetry cards to distribute in the local community.
- Share the poems in classrooms and work with teachers to lead their peers in writing their own poems.
- Videotape and share the recitation of the poems on the Urumuri Dada Facebook page.
- Participate in the global campaign by submitting the poems and/or videos to #with Malala. **Spark 4 – Call to Action!**
 - See guidelines: <https://www.withmalala.org/about/guidelines>

Appendix

Handouts

- a. Malala's Story
- b. Girls' Education Bingo
- c. Words on Fire: Malala's Poem
- d. Blank Poetry Template
- e. Poetry Example by Aryeh Shell

For more information, toolkits and resources, go to

- <https://www.malala.org/girls-education>
- <https://withmalala.org/about/resources>

Appendix A

MALALA'S STORY

1997 Growing up in Swat Valley

Malala was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora, a town in the Swat District of north-west Pakistan. Her father, Ziauddin Yousafzai named her after Malalai, a Pashtun heroine.

Ziauddin, who has always loved learning, ran a school in Swat adjacent to the family's home. He was known as an advocate for education in Pakistan, which has the second highest number of out of school children in the world, and became an outspoken opponent of Taliban efforts to restrict education and stop girls from going to school.



2009 Becoming an Education Activist

Malala shared her father's passion for learning and loved going to school. In 2009, as the Taliban's military hold on Swat intensified, Malala began writing a blog for the BBC Urdu service under a pseudonym, about fears that her school would be attacked and the increasing military activity in Swat. Television and music were banned, women were prevented from going shopping and then Ziauddin was told that his school had to close.

Malala and her father received death threats but continued to speak out for the right to education. Around this time, Malala was featured in a documentary made for The New York Times and was revealed as the author of the [BBC blog](#).

2011 Awarded Pakistan's First National Youth Peace Prize

In 2011, she received Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize and was nominated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu for the International Children's Peace Prize. In response to her rising popularity and national recognition, Taliban leaders voted to kill her.

2013 Attacked for Going to School

On 9 October 2012, as Malala and her friends were travelling home from school, a masked gunman entered their school bus and asked for Malala by name. She was shot with a single bullet which went through her head, neck and shoulder. Two of her friends were also injured in the attack.

Malala survived the initial attack, but was in a critical condition. She was moved to Birmingham in the United Kingdom for treatment at a hospital that specialises in military injuries. She was not discharged until January, 2013 by which time she had been joined by her family in the UK.

The Taliban's attempt to kill Malala received worldwide condemnation and led to protests across Pakistan. In the weeks after the attack, over 2 million people signed a right to education petition, and the National Assembly swiftly ratified Pakistan's first Right To Free and Compulsory Education Bill.



A Global Advocate for Girls' Education

2013 Establishing the Malala Fund

Malala and became a global advocate for the millions of girls being denied a formal education because of social, economic, legal and political factors. In 2013, Malala and Ziauddin co-founded the Malala Fund to bring awareness to the social and economic impact of girls' education and to empower girls to raise their voices, to unlock their potential and to demand change.

2014 Nobel Peace Prize

Malala accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on 10 December, 2014 with Indian children's rights and education advocate Kailash Satyarthi. Malala contributed her \$1.1 million prize money to financing the creation of a secondary school for girls in Pakistan.

See more at: <https://www.malala.org/malalasstory#sthash.OZvhJkyc.dpuf>

Appendix B

GIRLS' EDUCATION BINGO CARD

Investing in Girls Education

<p>Improves wages and jobs</p> <p><i>What is your ideal job?</i></p>	<p>Leads to empowerment</p> <p><i>What do you say NO to?</i></p>	<p>Promotes political leadership</p> <p><i>What would you change in your community if you could?</i></p>
<p>Reduces harm from natural disasters and climate change</p> <p><i>How can women help to prevent or adapt to climate change?</i></p>	<p>Decreases child marriage</p> <p><i>Do you think women should have the right to choose when and if to get married? Why?</i></p>	<p>Decreases HIV/AIDS and malaria</p> <p><i>How can you prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria?</i></p>
<p>Results in healthier, smaller families</p> <p><i>How many children would you like to have, if any? Why?</i></p>	<p>Saves lives</p> <p><i>Why do you think better education improves health?</i></p>	<p>Promotes economic growth</p> <p><i>How do women and girls contribute to the economy?</i></p>

Appendix C

Malala's Poem

Words on Fire

We will not be silent.
We will not be invisible.
We are speaking out, setting our words on fire.
With our books and pens, we are writing the story of our lives.
We will raise our voices high.
We are greater than any threat.
We are stronger than any fear.
We are every girl who wants to learn and live in peace.
We are every girl who wants to rise up and touch the sky.
The world has been waiting for us without even knowing it.
Our story is just the beginning, but our voices will be heard.
For when we stand together, we do not stand alone.
Stand Up. Stand Now.

Stand #with Malala.

Appendix D

BLANK POETRY TEMPLATE

Based on *Words on Fire* by Malala Yousafzai

We will not be _____

We will not be _____

We are speaking out, _____

With our books and pens, we are _____

We will _____

We are greater than _____

We are stronger than _____

We are every girl who wants _____

We are every girl who _____

The world has been waiting for us _____

Our story is just the beginning, _____

For when we stand together, _____

Stand Up. Stand _____

Stand #with Malala.

Appendix E

POETRY EXAMPLE

We will not be forgotten by this world.

We will not be made to feel small.

We are speaking out, with voices loud so that all can hear.

With our books and pens, we are rewriting HERstory and claiming our future.

We will set your hearts ablaze.

We are greater than the rising sun.

We are stronger than the oldest tree.

We are every girl who wants to learn.

We are every girl who yearns to be seen.

The world has been waiting for us to share our wisdom.

Our story is just the beginning, the end has not yet been written. It is up to us.

For when we stand together, we cannot fall.

Stand Up. Stand with me.

Stand #with Malala.

- *Aryeh Shell*