



SHIZA SHAHID

Malala Fund

Shiza Shahid is co-founder and CEO of the Malala Fund, the organization set up by the young Pakistani activist shot by the Taliban for her campaign for girls' education. Shiza has supported Malala Yousafzai's work since 2009, when she mentored Malala and others at a summer retreat in Pakistan to raise awareness about the Taliban's attack on female education. A graduate of Stanford University, Shiza began her career as a business analyst at McKinsey & Company in the Middle East. She grew up in Pakistan and was an activist for girls' rights from an early age. She is now leading the Malala Fund in its work to empower girls through education so that they can recognize their potential and be agents of positive change in their communities.

Educate Girls Everywhere

Funders who want to break the cycle of poverty and build a better global future should consider ways to help send more girls to school.

"We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave—to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential."

These were words that the brave and strikingly eloquent 16-year-old, Malala Yousafzai, spoke during a speech at the United Nations on July 12, 2013. The UN had declared it Malala Day in her honor. It was the first time Malala had spoken publicly in over nine months, since a Taliban gunman had stopped her school bus, asked "Who is Malala?" and then shot her in the head in a barbaric attempt to silence her campaign for girls' education.

Instead, Malala's voice grew louder and stronger, her campaign more effective. She made a miraculous recovery and, with her family and other passionate supporters by her side, launched a global organization, the **Malala Fund**, to get girls into school and teach them the skills they need to survive and thrive. Malala's goal for this organization is as large as one could expect from a girl with her ambition: "I want every girl to be in school," she says, "and every girl to be powerful!"

Malala addressed the UN assembly that day with her voice booming, demanding an education for the millions of girls around the world who were waiting, many undoubtedly

watching anxiously as she spoke on their behalf. Finally, the girls of the developing world had a spokesperson who truly understood, and who represented their own immense resilience and their desire to be educated.

Malala had been fighting for her right to go to school for over five years when she was shot. The Taliban had taken over her hometown, Swat Valley, and banned girls' education in 2009. Her struggle was illustrative of the struggles of millions of girls worldwide who do not get an adequate education because of poverty, political violence, lack of good schools, repressive social norms, and other barriers. Girls in the developing world are the greatest victims of the status quo: every three seconds a girl becomes a child bride; the leading cause of death for girls aged 15 to 19 is childbirth; and 80 percent of all human trafficking victims are girls.

But as Malala's story illustrates, these girls are not just victims—they are also the single most powerful force for change. When you educate a girl, you empower her to delay marriage and childbirth and give her an opportunity to earn an income. Girls with at least eight years of education are four times less likely to be married as children. Children born to literate mothers are 50 percent more likely to survive



past the age of five and twice as likely to go to school. When girls are educated, they don't just look after themselves—they invest in their families and communities. Girls and women invest 90 percent of each dollar that they earn back into their families, compared to 30 percent for men. Educating a girl is the most effective way to break the cycle of poverty.

That is why the Malala Fund hopes to make girls' education a global priority. The fund aims to identify education entrepreneurs and leaders who are developing and delivering education solutions that are effective and scalable, and to collaborate with them to develop their programs and innovations. To

achieve scale, the fund will advocate at the government, donor, and multilateral levels for wider adoption of effective solutions and for policies that break down barriers to education. In Malala's words:

"We must speak for girls who cannot speak for themselves. But we also believe that we can give girls back their voice. That's why I've created the Malala Fund. But we can't do it alone. That's why I'm asking you to join me, to stand with me in standing up for girls who can't speak for themselves. Because every girl deserves an education. Because every girl deserves a voice."

