International Women's Day meets The Malala Effect

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Toronto, ON (RPRN) 03/07/14 — This International Women's Day, Plan Canada recognizes the undeniable connection between education and women's and girls' empowerment and launches the children's book Every Day is Malala Day to honour the spirit and commitment of education activist Malala Yousafzai who survived a Taliban attack in 2012. Plan Canada will launch the book through a free and public art exhibit called The Malala Effect which presents the work of local Toronto artists who took direct inspiration from the book's pages.

"Empowering girls and women is central to our work in developing countries and it is also critical to ending global poverty," said Rosemary McCarney, President and CEO of Plan Canada. "So while we celebrate International Women's Day, we are also reminded of the real and unique challenges girls face today on the way to becoming women. An education can provide a foundation for girls to stand on as they become smart, capable, and confident women who will assert their rights and direct their own lives even while confronting challenges and barriers."

A book dedicated to 65 million girls worldwide who aren't in school

Plan acknowledges the tremendous progress made in women and girls' rights. In the last year alone, and following global action and advocacy

efforts, including Plan Canada's Because I am a Girl initiative, at least 1 million girls have entered school, but the work is not done. According to Plan, some 65 million girls are still currently denied the right to go to school because of their gender. Violence, child and forced marriage, and other harmful forms of gender discrimination prevent them from going to school.

Written by Rosemary McCarney, with Plan International, and dedicated to those 65 million girls, Every Day is Malala Day's powerful story and imagery capture how Malala Yousafzai's campaign for education serves as a daily inspiration to girls around the globe who experience adversity and barriers but also hope and triumph.

"We thought that telling the story of this amazing girl in a picture book format would help more people, including children, understand why girls' rights are important," added McCarney. "It is a children's book, but it holds a powerful message that is relevant to people of all age groups. We hope this book will create opportunities to talk about gender equality, how together we can all take a stand against gender-based violence, and the right of every child to an education."

Malala says book gives 'powerful voice' and 'hope' to girls worldwide

Plan Canada President and CEO Rosemary McCarney, and Plan International, began writing and compiling photos for the book almost ten months ago and were honoured to receive a letter this week from the teen activist, herself, indicating her strong support of the book and its message.

"Rosemary, by writing this book, you and Plan Canada have provided a powerful voice and hope to millions of girls around the world. Together, we will continue to highlight the courage and bravery of girls through education to recognize their potential and be agents of change in their communities," wrote Malala Yousafzai to Plan Canada.

Art exhibit inspired by book open to all for International Women's Day

The Malala Effect art exhibit is open to the public from March 7-8 at Walnut

Contemporary, a Toronto gallery. The exhibit presents the work of 24 local artists – including painters, photographers, and sculptors of various age groups and backgrounds. Each artist was presented with a single page from the book for inspiration and the exhibit represents a piece of original artwork for every page.

“When I look at Malala I see someone who has vision, passion, and is very resourceful. I’m inspired by that not only because of what she has survived but because I see that by following her passion she is changing the world in her own way and I believe that’s something we all can do,” said Nadia Lloyd, a Toronto abstract artist, designer, and event planner participating in the exhibit. “Art is my passion and my way of contributing to the world and so I was honoured to have the opportunity to align my passion with Malala’s through this exhibit.”

For people living outside of Toronto, there will be several ways to experience The Malala Effect online. Pictures of the artists and their exhibit pieces are currently featured at becauseiamagirl.ca and Plan invites everyone to join the conversation online at #theMalalaEffect .

About the Book

Every Day is Malala Day is a full-colour, hard cover book which includes 32 pages of vibrant photographs and messages from young girls around the world. Following its Canadian launch, it will be published around the world in several countries including Australia, Japan, Korea, and Brazil. It costs $21.40 when purchased directly through Plan Canada’s online catalogue Gifts of Hope and will also be available in bookstores. Plan proceeds from the book will support Plan Canada’s Because I am a Girl fund.

About Plan and the ‘Because I am a Girl’ initiative

Founded in 1937, Plan is one of the world’s oldest and largest international development agencies, working in partnership with millions of people around the world to end global poverty. Not for profit, independent and inclusive of all faiths and cultures, Plan has only one agenda: to improve the lives of

children. Because I am a Girl is Plan's global initiative to end gender inequality, promote girls' rights and lift millions of girls – and everyone around them – out of poverty. Visit plancanada.ca and becauseiamagirl.ca for more information.

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