



malaika

empowering me

About Malaika

Malaika is a nonprofit, grassroots organization with a mission to empower Congolese girls and their communities through education and health initiatives. Operating in the village of Kalebuka, in the Southeastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malaika was founded in 2007 by Noella Coursaris Musunka, a Congolese/Cypriot model and humanitarian, and a team of dedicated volunteers from the public and private sector.

91% of every dollar donated to Malaika goes directly to our programs. The remaining 9% covers essential administrative costs that are necessary to keeping our programs running. Malaika relies upon the dedication and hard work of 35 Congolese staff members working on the ground in the DRC, and around-the-clock support from a team of 30 volunteers working in the US, Europe, the DRC, and beyond. Malaika has only one paid international staff member, in New York.

Our work takes three distinct paths:

1. School



The Malaika School is a free, accredited school that provides a comprehensive and high quality education to girls in Kalebuka. In 2011 we welcomed our inaugural Kindergarten and first grade classes and have added an incoming class every year since. In Fall 2016 we welcomed our newest class, totaling a student body of 252 girls from grades K to 6.

The curriculum is structured around daily classes in French and English, on subjects including math, science, information technology, health and civic education. Great care is taken to cultivate the leadership potential of the students, from involvement in the Girl Scouts to field trips and community service projects, such as planting trees or teaching the community about malaria prevention. Art, music, theater and physical education classes are also a key part of the robust educational programming. Additionally, each girl receives two healthy meals a day - often her only ones. Our goal is to build the leadership capacity of each student so that she is empowered to give back to her community and to have a positive, long-term impact on the future of the DRC. In essence, we are creating a generation of change agents.

“Malaika has changed the way I dream – I used to have small ideas of what my life could be, but now I want to travel the world and experience everything.” Rose Muswamba, Grade 4A student at the Malaika School

2. Community



Above photo: Kevin O'Donovan, Coaches Across Continents

In 2013, Malaika partnered with FIFA to build the Kalebuka Football for Hope Center, a community center that offers education, health, entrepreneurship and sports programs to approximately 7,000 youth and adults in the village. Offerings include programs on health education and outreach sessions, such as our Village Health Worker trainings, Mothers First family planning program, and Drop Malaria program, which focuses on decreasing malaria through prevention and protection.

The Center also offers literacy, sewing, math and computer classes, allowing students to access the Internet. In the coming year, the Center will launch the Sustainable Pathways project, our premier vocational training program to teach out-of-school youth about conservation farming, entrepreneurship and enterprise development.

“Malaika inspires young girls to question tradition and culture and to build their own futures. To be part of a program where so many women are heard and so many new choices are created is unique. Malaika is changing the lives of thousands of people in the DRC.” Nick Gates, Founder of Coaches Across Continents

3. Infrastructure



Malaika has built seven wells that supply over 14,000 people with clean drinking water, directly reducing the number of water-related illnesses in the community, such as cholera and diarrhea.

“Before the wells were built, we had to draw water from the river. We had to walk many kilometers to reach it and the water would make our skin itch. Now we can feel the difference and our children do not get sick as often.” Kelly Kalala Kabund, Kalebuka resident

About Noella Coursaris Musunka



Malaika was founded by Noella Coursaris Musunka, an international model and humanitarian who was born in the DRC. Following the passing of her father at the age of 5, and with her mother lacking the resources to look after her, Noella was sent to live with relatives in Switzerland. After receiving a degree in business management, Noella was discovered and began a successful modeling career that took her from the pages of *Vogue* and *Elle* to a global stage. As she travelled the world, she discovered a platform from which to share her passion for human rights. Noella’s work with Malaika has led to invitations to present at UNICEF and Cambridge University, and she has spoken several times alongside President Clinton at Clinton Global Initiative annual meetings. Noella has been interviewed about her philanthropic work on global news outlets such as CNN and the BBC, and has given a TED talk and presented in front of top executives from multinationals like SAP and T-Systems. In 2016, Noella was named one of *Elle* magazine’s 50 incredible women who are shaping Africa, and one of the most powerful women in philanthropy by *Lifestyles* magazine.

Alongside being a mother to two young children, Noella continues to work as a model but now her passion is to *model with meaning*, using her profile to raise awareness for causes she believes in as a mother, a feminist and a believer in the intrinsic human right to education, health and opportunity.

Videos

Introducing Malaika:

<https://youtu.be/yjMGwYT9JeQ>

How Malaika changed Esther's life:

<https://youtu.be/NUnMJNSN9H0>

DRC Statistics

Population: **65.7 million**

Life expectancy at birth: **49.6 years**

Literacy rate for young women: **53.3%**

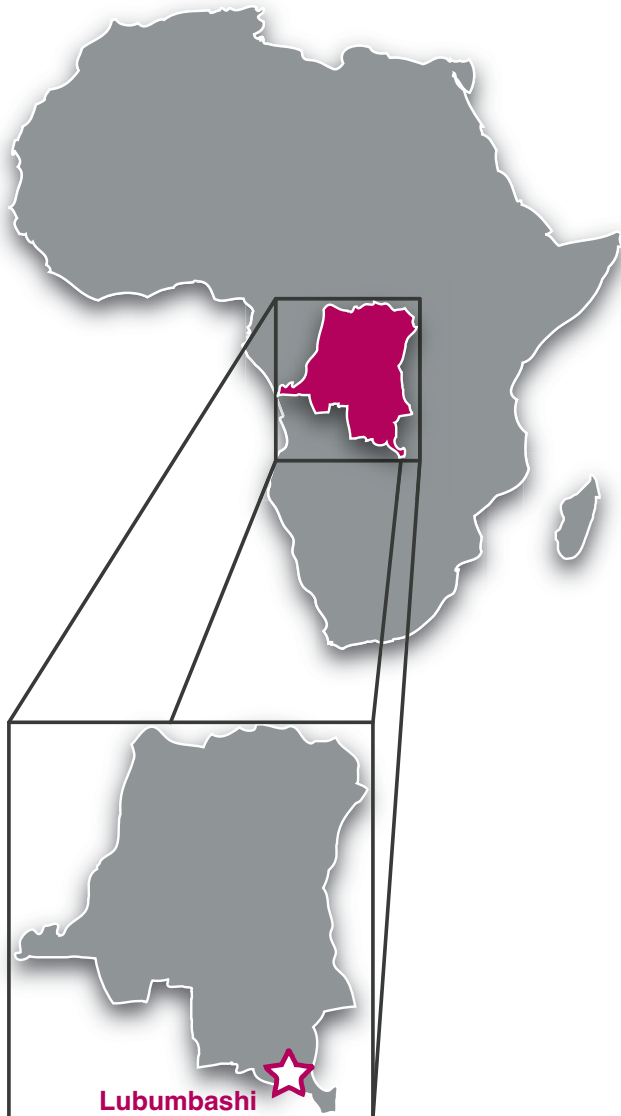
Young women attending secondary school: **28.3%**

Access to clean water in rural areas: **28.9%**

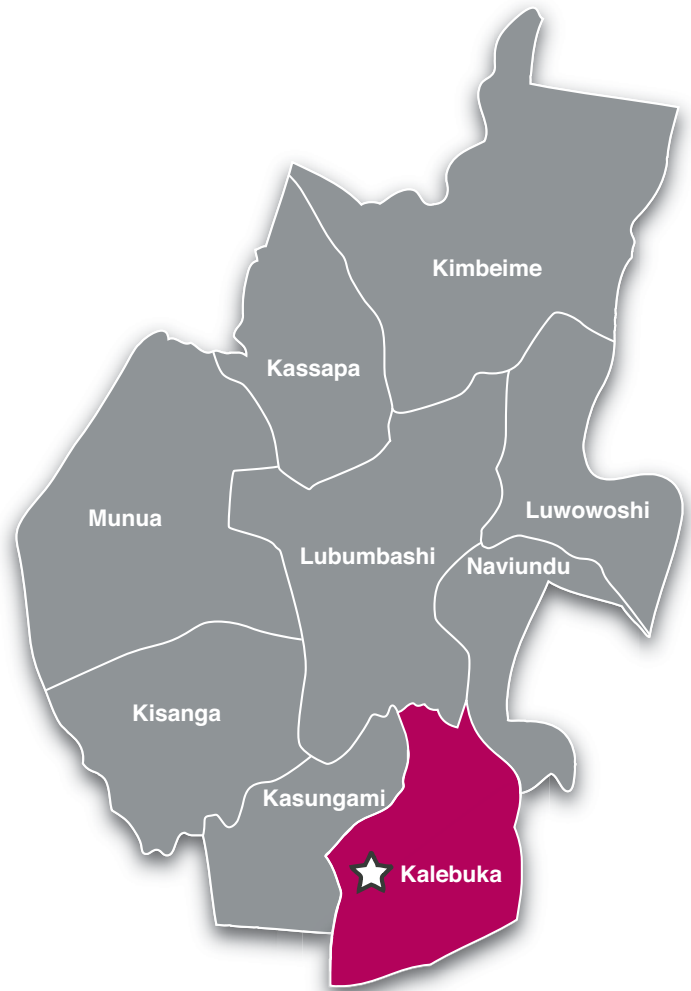
*courtesy of UNICEF, 2012

Location

Democratic Republic of Congo



Lubumbashi Districts



Malaika believes in the enormous potential of the Congolese people to bring about positive, lasting change on their own terms. We merely provide the tools for community members to move forward and live their lives with dignity and purpose.

HEADQUARTERS

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MALAIKA SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

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Lubumbashi, Province du Haut Katanga, RDC

KALUBUKA FOOTBALL FOR HOPE CENTER

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Quartier Kalebuka, Lubumbashi,
Province du Haut Katanga, RDC