

"I AM DISCOVERING... I AM DEAN CLOSE"

NAVIGATION

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THE IMPORTANCE OF A GREAT EDUCATION

FRIDAY 12 MAY 2017

Children can have very different experiences of education depending on where they live in the world. For girls living in the Democratic Republic of Congo a good education can be the difference between earning enough money to feed their families and themselves and starvation.

At the latest of our talks@ series, humanitarian and philanthropist, Noella Coursaris Munsunka, explained to our Senior Prep pupils about how girls in the DRC, a country where there are 70 million people and 7 million children don't go to school, are being educated by the charity she founded, Malaika.

Malaika means angel in Swahili and is the name of the girls' school she founded ten years ago. Currently the school has a population of 250 girls and not only provides education to girls from the nearby villages it offers resources to families in a purpose-built community

centre; teaching mothers about nutrition and helping them to learn to sew. Malaika also provides local communities with fresh water and electricity which wouldn't be available if the school had not been built.

Girls come from the poorest of backgrounds, each family can only send one child and they must live between 1-3 km of the school, for some of the girls the only food they eat is whilst they are at school. In the early days the school closed for the holidays but volunteers realised because the girls were not coming to school they were not eating. Now the school is open all year round offering clubs, activities and those important two meals the girls need to stay healthy.

Pupils heard some tragic stories about some of the students at Malaika, for instance Deborah. She was the only surviving member of her family, who all died trying to protect her from vicious fire attack. Despite her traumatic experiences, Deborah is still determined to be a successful seamstress.

"It was a humbling experience to hear how essentials such as food and education are considered a luxury in other parts of the world." said pupil, Katie Smart. "I feel inspired to work hard at school and be appreciative of the everyday essentials I often take for granted."

Pupils asked lots of great questions at the end such as: How long did it take to build the school?, Do they have holidays? and How long is their school day?

