

Youth activists

1 Read the information and discuss with your partner. Then answer the questions.

- 1 Are you involved in any organisations that deal with problems that concern young people?
- 2 Do you think it's good to have organisations that can help young people in this way?

2a Read the profiles. Which young activists were inspired to take action based on their own experiences?

Nearly half the entire world population is under the age of 18. More and more young people are taking action in their countries. There are organisations that have campaigns and projects that make an impact. They work with problems that concern young people, such as education, inequality, poverty, crime and pollution. It isn't easy but they want to make the world a better place to live in.

Sometimes it's the youngest people who can have the biggest impact. These three teenagers are all doing their bit to make a difference in the world.

Malala Yousafzai

Malala is one of the most famous youth activists in the world today. When she was 15 years old, she was shot on her way to school in her home country of Pakistan. This was because a military group wanted to stop female education where she lived. However, Malala believed all girls had the right to an education and she brought this to the attention of the world by writing an anonymous blog and giving interviews to journalists. But her attack shocked the world. Her condition was life-threatening and she had to travel to England for treatment, where she spent three months in hospital. After her recovery, Malala stayed in England with her family and attended school while continuing to fight for a girl's right to an education. In 2014, at 17 years old, she received the Nobel Peace Prize for her important campaigning and is the youngest person ever to win the award.



Malala Yousafzai

Zachary Bonner

Now 18 years old, American-born Zachary founded a charity called Little Red Wagon Foundation when he was just seven. As a child, he was always interested in voluntary work and did lots to help the underprivileged children of the USA. Then he had the idea to start the charity, which helps the 1.3 million children in his country who are homeless. As part of his campaign to raise money for his foundation, Zachary walked 2,500 miles from Florida to California in 2010. In 2013, he lived outdoors in a cardboard box for a week to try to understand what hunger and homelessness feel like. Hard-working Zachary is always fighting for his campaign, and most recently achieved a Guinness World Record for collecting more than £500,000 of food in 24 hours.

Mohammed Manan Ansari

In a region of India known for its poverty, Manan started working in the local mine when he was only eight years old, spending eight hours a day doing a very hard and dangerous job. Two years later, he was rescued by a child labour activist and sent to Jaipur for the chance to study. This change made a huge difference to Manan's life. He wanted to help other children in a similar situation, so he started to campaign for children's rights. He visited many families who chose to put their children to work in the mines instead of school, and tried to convince them of the disadvantages of child labour and the importance of an education. His campaign means that more and more children are being saved from working so young. Manan even travelled to Switzerland a few years ago to speak at an international conference against child labour.



Mohammed Manan Ansari

**2b Read the profiles again. Choose the correct alternative to complete the sentences.**

- 1 Malala Yousafzai is a well-known teenager because:
  - a she fights for education rights.
  - b she won an important award.
  - c she writes an interesting blog.
- 2 She won the Nobel Peace Prize:
  - a when she lived in Pakistan.
  - b during her time in hospital.
  - c two years after her attack.
- 3 Zachary Bonner campaigns for:
  - a the poor people of his country.
  - b children who have nowhere to live.
  - c people to have more food.
- 4 He started his own charity when he was:
  - a a child.
  - b 18 years old.
  - c in 2013.
- 5 Mohammed Manan Ansari is a young activist who:
  - a never had an education.
  - b campaigns against poverty in India.
  - c believes children should not work.
- 6 He decided to become an activist:
  - a after seeing young children working in a mine.
  - b to help others who experienced the same as him.
  - c after going to a conference in Switzerland.

**2c Read the sentences and write *education rights, homelessness or child labour*.**

- 1 Some parents want their children to earn money rather than go to school.  
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- 2 In some parts of the world, girls aren't allowed to go to school.  
.....
- 3 There are over a million children living on the streets in the USA.  
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- 4 One young activist's life was in danger because of the importance of their campaign.  
.....
- 5 An organisation started by a youth means children without a home at least won't go hungry.  
.....
- 6 Children who work from a young age often don't have the chance of an education.  
.....

**Gateway to culture**

**3a Work with a partner and discuss the questions.**

- 1 Are there any well-known youth activists in your country? Who are they? What kind of change do they want to achieve?
- 2 Why do you think people want to campaign for change?
- 3 Find out about a youth activist, either from your country or a different part of the world. Discuss your chosen person with another pair.

**PROJECT**

**3b You are going to work on a presentation about the youth activist that you discussed in 3a. Read the points and prepare your project research.**

- 1 Work in pairs. Do some research on the Internet to find out the following information about your chosen activist:
  - what kind of activist they are
  - why they became an activist
  - how they are helping to bring about change
  - what other roles they play in their country
  - any awards they have won or recognition they have achieved
  - any other information that you think is valuable.
- 2 Decide who will talk about each of the points above and add in any additional information to make your presentation more interesting.

**3c In your pairs, use your notes to give a presentation to the rest of the class on your chosen activist. Your presentation should be around three minutes long.**