This is such an exciting day for us, because it marks the beginning of a new era(时代) in my home country Colombia. Most of you may know me as an artist, as an entertainer（艺人）, and that's indeed（的确；实在；真正地；甚至） my calling and what I've been doing since I was 13 years old.

今天，是一个激动人心的日子，因为它代表着，我的家乡哥伦比亚，进入了一个新的阶段。你们大多数人可能知道，我是个艺术家或者艺人。没错，我从13岁就开始梦想成为一个艺术家，我实现了梦想，并且一直在这条道路上努力着。

But I never would have imagined when I started out that my work as an artist would end up being the vehicle（车辆；工具；交通工具；运载工具；传播媒介；媒介物） for me to serve my greater purpose in life of working towards eradicating（根除） poverty（贫困） through the power of Education.

但是，我从来没有想过，我的艺术家事业，会帮助我实现更伟大的人生梦想，那就是，我想通过教育的力量来消除贫困。

As a Colombian citizen, inequality（不平等；不同；不平均） as a concept that sadly one becomes very familiar with at a very young age. It's a country like many others in Latin America where a few have a lot. A lot have almost nothing and where if you're born poor, you will almost certainly die poor.

不幸的是，作为一个哥伦比亚公民，我从很小就懂得了什么是不公平。哥伦比亚，和其他很多拉丁美洲国家一样，是一个贫富不均的国家。在哥伦比亚，一小部分人，掌握着巨额的财富，而很多人却几乎一无所有。在这里，如果你出身贫困，那你一辈子都会穷困潦倒。

Where people don't access equal opportunities, and because of that generation after generation, after generation live trapped in the same vicious（恶毒的；恶意的；堕落的；有错误的；品性不端的；剧烈的） cycle fed by prejudice and inaction.

在这里，因为偏见和不作为，人们得到的机会是不平等的，一代又一代，就这样不断恶性循环。

Growing up in my country when I was around eight years old, I remember I saw kids my age who, instead of being in school, were already working in the streets, were barefoot（赤脚的） in the park. Kids like me whose reality was completely different than mine only because of the circumstances into which they were born.

我就在这样的环境里长大。我记得在8岁的时候，我看见和我年纪相仿的孩子，他们不去上学，而是在街上打工，他们光着脚丫待在公园里。像我一样的孩子，他们的生活和我的生活完全不同，因为他们的成长环境太差了。

It was really hard for me to accept that, to accept that something so unjust（不公平的，不公正的；非正义的） didn't have a solution. There had to be something that could be done. So, I often asked myself why the adults, around me were so resigned（顺从的；已辞职的；己放弃的） to the fact that these kids who were just like me or even their own children, were living in a parallel（平行的；类似的，相同的） reality so different and so cruel.

对于我而言，这是难以接受的。这样不公平的事情，居然没有解决办法。肯定有办法解决这个问题！所以，我经常问自己，我身边的大人们，他们看到那些和我相似的孩子，甚至是他们自己的孩子，大家同在一片土地上生活，但有人面对的现实和其他人那么不一样，这多么残酷啊，这些大人为什么能对此无动于衷？

As Kofi Annan put it, poverty is intolerable（无法忍受的；难耐的） in a world of plenty, so as soon as I had some success, the first thing I wanted to do was to invest as many resources I could into what later would become the most meaningful project of my life, working for children.

正如Kofi Annan所言，在一个富裕的世界里，我们不能忍受贫困的存在。所以，在我取得了一些成功之后，我想做的第一件事，就是尽可能地投资，而我投资的项目，后来变成了我人生中最有意义的项目，那就是为孩子们而努力。

So I set out to find a team, a team of people, who dream big and worked hard and thought like me to help me right the wrongs that I had witnessed throughout my entire childhood, and that's when our foundation The Barefoot Foundation, ‘Pies Descalzos Fundacion' was born.

所以，我开始行动，组建团队，团队成员们有着伟大的梦想，他们努力奋斗，他们的价值观和我一样，我们一起努力，去改变那些我从小到大看到的糟糕的事。就这样，我们的基金会成立了，它的名字是The Barefoot Foundation（西语Pies Descalzos Fundacion，中文可译作光脚丫基金会）。

I knew, and I was only 18 years old then, but I knew that I wanted to focus on children and improving their lives, but I didn't know where to start. So, I really felt that I needed to learn what the roots of inequality and low social mobility（移动性；机动性；） were.

虽然那时我才18岁，但是，我知道，我想努力改善孩子们的生活，但是我不知道从何开始。所以，我觉得我需要找到不平等的根源，找到社会阶层固化的根源。

So, I decided to study the reasons why children were working in the streets, or why some children were being recruited by the violent organizations, like the paramilitary（准军事部队） or the guerrillas（游击队）, why were so many children suffering from chronic（慢性的；长期的；习惯性的） malnutrition（营养不良）, and I realized that most of the issues that children face in my country had and have a common denominator（共同特征）, the lack of access to quality education.

因此，我决定，我要研究一下，为什么有孩子在街上打工，为什么有军事组织或者游击队雇佣孩子，为什么这么多孩子长期营养不良。我意识到，在我的国家，孩子们面临的问题的成因，都有一个共性，那就是，他们没有接受良好的教育。

To me, it became crystal（透明的，清澈的） clear that education was a surest way to give all these kids the best fighting chance of improving their circumstances in life, because education is the great equalizer.

对于我来说，一切都很清楚了。教育，才能帮助孩子们赢得改变人生的机会，因为教育能够最有效地消除不平等。

When I started building schools in Colombia, we chose the most remote areas, areas where there was literally nothing, no infrastructure, no paved roads, no electricity, no potable（适于饮用的） water, and we decided to build in those places but not only build schools but state-of-the-art schools.

我在哥伦比亚开始建学校的时候，我们选择了最偏远的地区，这里几乎什么都没有，没有基础设施，没有平坦的道路，没有电，没有饮用水。在这里，我们不仅建学校，而且建的是最先进的学校。

Schools with comprehensive（全面的） models that included ECD programs, school feeding programs, parent and teacher training, and another very important part is we've decided to engage（参与） the government as a strategic partner, and made it nearly impossible for them to say no to doing their part by showing them results through our holistic（整体的；全盘的） model that really proved to work.

这些学校有全面的配备，有早期教育项目，有饮食项目，有父母训练和教师训练项目。另外，很重要一点的是，我们决定让政府作为战略伙伴参与进来。为了确保政府能够参与，我们向他们展示我们设计的全面发展模式的成果，让他们知道这个模式是有效的。

We noticed that as soon as a school is built in those places, everything is transformed. The improvements to the infrastructure were jaw-dropping（令人惊愕的，令人震惊的）. Electricity, and potable water were made available, made accessible. Roads were paved, malnutrition plummeted（陡直落下，快速落下；（价值、数量等）骤然下跌）, but the best part of all is the academic results.

我们注意到，在那些地区，一旦建了学校，一切都改变了。基础设施得到极大的提升，效果惊人。电，饮用水都有了，孩子们都能用得上。道路铺平了，营养不良的情况明显减少，但是，最令人欣慰的，是孩子们的学业成绩。

The kids really responded academically, and now those kids who could have been recruited by the guerrillas or paramilitaries or that could have had a completely different outcomes（结果） for their lives, they're now on their way to the university and thriving（蓬勃发展的） in their communities. Some of them are athletes. Some of them are professionals.

孩子们的学业成绩真的发生了变化。如今，这些本可能会被游击队或者军事组织招走的孩子，这些人生结局本来会完全不同的孩子，他们正在朝大学走去，他们正在茁壮成长。有的孩子成为了运动员，有的孩子成为了教授。