



August 2, 2007

Girls around the world



At Toy Fair in February, I mentioned a new line of dolls by a company called Karito Kids. I was struck by how beautiful they were, and I loved the charitable tie-in that gave kids the opportunity to use the Internet to help other kids across the world. Now, finally, these dolls are in stock. There are five dolls in the collection, each from a different country. The faces were sculpted to reflect the beauty of the different ethnicities around the globe, Asian, Caucasian, African, Latin and Mediterranean. There's an American, Italian, Kenyan, Chinese and Mexican girl, each with her own story.

If it sounds a bit like American Girls, that's probably not a coincidence. The wildly successful line of dolls has turned a lot of heads in the toy industry, particularly since you can only get American Girl dolls directly from American Girl. But the American Girl dolls are designed for ages 8 and up. The Karito Kids dolls are designed with slightly different proportions from the American Girl dolls. The AG dolls are 18" tall, and the Karito girls are 21" tall. But the Karito girls are much narrower than the American Girls, which apparently makes them easier for smaller kids to carry around and play with. So the Karito Kids dolls are recommended for ages 6 and up. The book that is included with each doll is written at a 5th grade reading level though. The clothes are really exceptional - very contemporary and nicely detailed; the company plans to add more outfits soon.

There will be a web site tie-in with these dolls, which should be a nice touch. Kids will be able to activate an online account using a code that comes with the doll. Each doll includes a donation to [Plan USA](#) and the child gets to choose one of four areas they would like their donation to support, growing up healthy, learning, habitat or livelihood. After that initial donation, kids can play games to earn credits, and then donate their credits back to Plan USA.

I'd never heard of Plan USA before I was researching Karito Kids, but I'm impressed. They've been around since 1937 and they help over 1 million children in 49 developing countries around the world. Among other things, they have a sponsor-a-child program, which is nothing unusual, but according to their website, they actually encourage sponsoring families to visit the child they sponsor. That sounds like an incredible experience to me. But I digress.

The web component doesn't seem to be fully up and running yet, but the dolls are really something special. For more information, visit [kidsgive.com](#).