

PROJECT-BASED LESSON

DISPLAY THE NUMBERS: CREATING PUBLIC ART

Summary

“Public art can express civic values, enhance the environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, and question our assumptions. Placed in a public site, this art is therefore for everyone, a form of collective community expression – from the once celebrated but now unrecognized general on a horse to the abstract sculpture that may baffle the passer-by on first glance.” – Penny Balkin Bach, Director of the nonprofit Association for Public Art in Philadelphia

Public art is artwork that is temporarily or permanently situated in a public space; often intended not only to enhance the surroundings, but also to communicate ideas and inspire the people who see it. In this lesson, students will use the themes presented in *Girl Rising* to inspire a public work of art. The intent of the display is to instruct or inform the public about pressing issues related to educating girls in the developing world.

Objective

Students will work together to translate data related to girls in the developing world into a public work of art to express their feelings about these issues and to educate others.

Subjects

Social Studies, Art, Math

Common Core Standards

- CCSS.Math.Content.HSS-IC.A.1: Understand statistics as a process for making inferences about population parameters based on a random sample from that population.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RST.9-10.7 Translate quantitative or technical information expressed in words in a text into visual form (e.g., a table or chart) and translate information expressed visually or mathematically (e.g., in an equation) into words.

Time Needed: Three to six class periods; 50 minutes each (this will vary depending on the type of art project that your students create)

Skill Building

- Creative problem solving
- Developing a public work of art intended to educate and inform others

Resources and Materials

- Teacher-selected film chapters from *Girl Rising*
- Teacher Guides for selected chapters, which include a list of Resources, a mini-lesson for introducing the film chapters, and a Film Viewing Guide
- Additional art materials, dependent on the final project
- *Girl Rising* Statistics (found in the Resources section)
- Internet access to explore [Google Arts & Culture](#) and to search public art
- See Additional Resources Guide for other resources, including relevant videos (found in the Resources section).

Planning Note: this project is designed to encourage students to educate others through art, and to build an understanding of how art can be influential in our world. Prior to beginning, decide what is appropriate for your class. Advanced seniors will probably need far less support and direction than freshmen. Make sure students clear all plans for displaying their art project with school administration.

Essential Questions

1. How does public art influence and instruct?
2. How can public art be used to educate and inform?
3. How can public art become an interactive experience? Should public art always be interactive?

Sample Content Question

1. How can public art be used to explain meaningful statistics?

Building a Foundation and Making Connections

View the selected film chapter(s) from *Girl Rising* and use the Introductory Lessons and Film Viewing Guides, relevant Country and Issue Fact Sheets, and Resources to engage students so that they begin to develop an understanding of the numerous issues that influence a girl's ability to access an education. As students watch the film chapter(s) and research the issues, have them take note of any statistics they discover.

Creating Your Art Project

Explain to students that the class will be creating a public work of art to illustrate one of the statistics used in the film. For example: Every 30 seconds, approximately 13 girls under the age of 18 are married. To represent this data, students could draw life-size figures of 13 girls on large sheets of paper and space them down a length of hall that takes 30 seconds to walk. At one end, hang a sign noting, "In the next 30 seconds, the time it takes to walk down this hall, 16 girls under age 18 will have been married in the world."

See the "Statistics Used in *Girl Rising*" in the Resources section for additional information and updated data.

In small groups, have students share their beliefs about the purpose of public art and describe any public art that they know of in their community. Is there public art on the school grounds? Explore your school and start to consider the type of art projects that might work, as well as where and how they could be displayed. Ask students to discuss the data from the film chapter(s) they watched and begin making decisions about what information to represent and how to best display the data.

Encourage students to think about cost, getting permission to create their display, creating a timeline for the various stages of the project, if the message can be clearly understood by the public, if the display poses potential danger or undue distraction, and how/when the display will be disassembled and cleaned up.

Ideas for Encouraging All Learners

English Language Learners

- Encourage students to incorporate their native language, culture, and background in their art project.

Support Services

- Encourage students to present their art project in a format that is supportive of their skills.

Gifted and Talented Students

- Encourage students to brainstorm and gain appropriate school and community permission to display their art project in a public setting other than school, such as a local coffee house, community center, city hall, or art gallery.