PROJECT-BASED LESSON: MY STORY

Summary
Students will learn about the positive impact an education can have on a girl’s life. After viewing the film chapter(s), students will reflect on their own lives and write about how they make a difference to others. The students’ final essays will be published in a class book.

Objective
Students will explore how they impact the world in positive ways through a narrative essay.

Subjects
Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies

Common Core State Standards
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Resources and Materials
- Film chapter for Sokha from Cambodia
- Film chapter for Suma from Nepal
- Large sheets of paper or poster board for each group of three to four students
- See Additional Resources Guide in the Resources section for additional videos.

Time Needed
Three to four class periods; 50 minutes each

Essential Questions
1. How do our lives impact others?
2. When the life of one person in a family is changed, how does this impact the lives of others in that family?
3. What happens when people step in and help others? How does our world improve?

Content Question Ideas
1. How did Suma’s teacher change her life?
2. What does Suma mean by, “I have important things to do?”
3. In the course of Sokha’s story as told in the film, her life changes quite dramatically. How? And how does the change in Sokha’s story affect others?

Student Skill Building
- Communicating thoughts and ideas effectively in an essay
- Working with the writing process and creating a published piece of writing
- Connecting one’s life and experiences to the lives of others

Building a Foundation and Making Connections
- Let students know that they will be learning about the challenges faced by girls living in developing countries and how they are meeting the specific challenge of going to school.
- Break students into groups, and on large sheets of paper or poster board have each group list 10 reasons why it is important to go to school. Have groups share their answers with the class.
• Before students watch the film chapters, ask them to pay special attention to how the girls’ lives change when a person or an organization steps in to help them.
• Watch the film chapter(s) for Sokha from Cambodia and/or Suma from Nepal.
• After watching the film chapter(s), have students make a list of all of the things that changed in the girls’ lives when someone stepped in to help them. How do these items relate to the lists the class made before watching the film?
• Review the Educating Girls Issue Fact Sheet with students. What information surprises students? What do students find most interesting?

The Essay

Suma’s life was changed by one teacher advocating for her to go to school; then a social worker stepped in to help free her. Now she is able to help other girls be free. Suma is changing lives. Sokha’s life was changed when someone provided a safe home and school for her. How many people has Sokha now inspired with her story?

Students will write an essay describing a time when they helped someone, and the difference their help made in the other person’s life; or describing a situation where they would like to help someone. For example: Who is helped when you feed your family’s dog? Are you helping your parents, because they now have less work to do? Are you helping your dog, as he now has a full belly? Or both? If a neighbor is sick, how might it help her to take care of her pet until she feels better? How does this impact the neighbor’s life?

Let students know that what they write about doesn’t have to seem “big.” The important concept is for students to begin to see themselves as agents of change. Small changes can add up to big things. Kids don’t need to wait until they grow up – they can impact the world in a positive way today.

Let students know that they will be following the standard writing process the class uses, and all of the essays will be published in one class book. Ask students how they would like to share their book. Could it be left in the library or front office for everyone to read? Is there a place to display the book in the school next to a piece of blank poster board, so other students can write ways they have helped, or would like to help, others?

Ideas for Encouraging All Learners

English Language Learners

• Have students use drawings to plan their story. Work with students to label their drawings to help provide the vocabulary they need.
• Turn the essay into a Q and A format, giving students specific questions to answer.

Support Services

• Allow students to use a different medium to communicate their story. Students could write a shorter poem or depict their story through art.
• Turn the essay into a Q and A format, giving students specific questions to answer.

Gifted and Talented

• Encourage students to learn more about non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and how they help support girls education in developing countries around the world.

Additional Resources

• Girl Rising Partners
  - A New Day Cambodia at www.anewdaycambodia.org
  - CARE at www.care.org
  - Partners In Health at www.pih.org
  - Room to Read at www.roomtoread.org
  - Girl Up at www.girlup.org
  - Plan at www.planusa.org or www.plan-international.org
  - World Vision at www.worldvision.org

• Picture books that examine the impact of development programs:
  - Beatrice’s Goat by Page McBrier and Lori Lohstoeter
  - One Hen: How One Small Loan Made a Big Difference by Katie Smith Milway and Eugenie Fernandes
  - The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough by Katie Smith Milway and Sylvie Daigneault
  - The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families by Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore
  - Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa by Jeanette Winter