



# Social Action Projects

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**S**ocial action projects involve students in addressing real-world problems by working to understand the issues involved and to contribute constructively to a solution. Art can be used in these settings as a catalyst to healing, raising public awareness, or political activism. Social action projects are a wonderful way to teach students the value of helping others and to show them how art can make a difference in people's lives. These sites point to engaging social action projects and ways to connect your students to the needs of others.

## Empty Bowls

[www.emptybowls.net](http://www.emptybowls.net)

The Empty Bowls project invites participants to create ceramic bowls for use in serving a simple meal of soup and bread at a public fundraising event. Guests choose a bowl to use that day and keep as a reminder that there are always empty bowls in the world. In exchange for a meal and a bowl, guests are asked to give a minimum donation of ten dollars. All money raised under the name of Empty Bowls must be used for fighting hunger. For example, meal sponsors may choose a local hunger-fighting organization to receive the money collected. Visit the Empty Bowls site to learn how your students can participate in this project.

## The Memory Project

[www.thememoryproject.org](http://www.thememoryproject.org)

In the Memory Project, started by Ben Schumaker, advanced high school and university level art students create original portraits

of children living in orphanages around the world. The portraits are then sent to the children as a personal keepsake that provides them with a memory of their childhood and helps to honor their cultural heritage and identity. On the project site, you can browse a gallery of finished portraits, see photos of participating students and orphans, and find out how your students can get involved in the project.

## The New Orleans Kid Camera Project

[www.kidcameraproject.org](http://www.kidcameraproject.org)

The New Orleans Kid Camera Project was created by Cat Malovic and Joanna Rosenthal to address the psychological and emotional impact of Hurricane Katrina on children returning home to New Orleans. Through this project, young people are given the opportunity to learn a host of skills that they use to document their communities and tell their stories through photography and video. The project site includes galleries of the kids' photographs, video podcasts, blogs, project information, news items, a mailing list, and a page that describes different ways to contribute to the project.

## Film Your Issue

[www.filmyourissue.com](http://www.filmyourissue.com)

Film Your Issue is an annual movie-making competition that encourages young people, ages sixteen to twenty-five, to add their voices to public dialogue on issues of concern by producing thirty-to-sixty-second "issue films." While your students may not actually participate in the contest, you'll find a number of

exceptional student-made movies on this site to inspire your students to speak up about important issues through film. There are also guidelines and tips on making short films, plus information on registering for the competition.

## The Power of One

[www.powr1.org](http://www.powr1.org)

The Power of One is a student organization, started in Florida's Broward County Public Schools, designed to empower students to become change agents and to make a difference in the world. The group encourages students to research social issues and to start questioning what they can do to make a difference in the lives of other people. Their website provides student videos on hunger, poverty, unemployment, and other social issues; suggestions on places to volunteer and ways to help others; and information on joining the organization and starting up a local Power of One group. ☺

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