



# INDIA

LESSON PLAN

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RESPECT OTHER PEOPLE'S  
BOUNDARIES AND DO NOT LET  
OTHERS CROSS YOUR OWN





# INDIA

## Amid monsoons

With an area of 3.2 million square kilometres and a population of 1.3 billion, India is the seventh largest and second most populated country in the world. It is located on a self-named peninsula in southern Asia. It borders Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh.

The most significant climate phenomenon in India is the monsoon. The wind, and the heavy summer rainfall and winter droughts that it brings, determine the rhythm of life of the country's inhabitants, the possibility of growing edible crops and the size of the harvest. During the transitional periods between the summer and winter monsoon, India is often struck by cyclones, which are accompanied by heavy downpours causing floods.

## A country of great contrasts

India has a very polarising effect on people. Some love it; others hate it. On the one hand, it is a country of intense smells, colours, singing, splendour, richness and prayer. On the other hand, it is also a country of poverty, filth, intense heat and humidity, child labour, violence and a caste system, which is still in effect despite being formally abolished with the constitution of 1950.

The tradition of social classes and castes (*jati*) originates from the Indian forefather Manu and the tenet that every person is born into a concrete caste that determines their social position for life. The basic concepts in this system are *dharma*, the obligations arising from one's place in society and from the stage of life, and *karma*, the sum of one's deeds, which determines the next stage in the chain of reincarnation. The society consists of four *varna* (social classes), which are traditionally believed to have originated from the body of the first man. The highest *varna*, created from the mouth of the ancestor, are the Brahmins,



that is to say priests and scholars. The arms were the origin of the Kshatriyas: officials, soldiers and landowners. From the thighs came the Vaishyas – merchants, craftsmen and peasants – and from the feet, the Shudras, i.e. land tenants, accountants and servants. Outside this system are the Dalits: pariahs, commonly called “untouchable”, of whom more than 200 million live currently in India. They carry out the so-called unclean professions, which require contact with blood, excrement, and animal or human corpses. They are excluded from society. For centuries,

untouchables could not live together with people from higher castes. They were not allowed to enter temples or draw water from wells that those of better standing used. It was possible to use violence against them, even burn down their village, with impunity. Although nowadays the fate of untouchables is improving, the caste system still has a huge impact on their lives.

## A glimmer of hope in the Calcutta red light district

There are many social outcasts in India. Homeless and on the verge of extreme poverty, their everyday life is marked by humiliation and hunger. They make a living from begging. They often fall victim of violence, and their life is in constant peril. Calcutta is both a transit point and a destination for morally lost people. In the city's red light district, the children live together with their mothers working here. They face many dangers every day. However, Urmi Basu made this difficult world a little easier to live in. First, she set up a tiny common room for them. She later established a boarding school and a kindergarten. Currently, Urmi takes care of more than 250 children, who now have an opportunity to learn and develop their passions, and receive hot meals and school supplies. This helps them escape the vicious circle of poverty and gives them a chance for a different, better life.





Duration:  
45 minutes

## SUBJECT

# Respect other people's boundaries and do not let others cross your own

Arrange the classroom for group work. Print the materials from the appendices. Show the students fragments of the film available as an appendix to this lesson plan. Before the class, watch the full episode available at [www.kulczykfoundation.org.pl](http://www.kulczykfoundation.org.pl).

## WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Each person has an individual physical and mental space, which is reserved only for them. This space must not be crossed by anyone against their will, not even by people very close to them. Each person has a space to which they invite only those whom they choose: those closest to them, family and friends. It is reserved exclusively for them. Not everyone is aware of the fact that they have the right to maintain their personal space and enforce its boundaries. This includes intimate space and objects they consider important and their own, as well as thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Those who are unable to identify their physical boundaries cannot react when these boundaries are breached. Despite the discomfort and suffering, they give in. The following lesson is about establishing one's own boundaries. Students will experience how it feels when their physical boundaries are crossed and will be able to talk with their peers about it. They have the opportunity to learn and define their own boundaries. This exercise will help them to understand the emotions of someone whose boundaries are being crossed.



Issues

## OBJECTIVES

Maybe you can take just one step with your students, maybe two, or maybe even all three. It will always be a success for both you and your students!

- Step 1 – KNOW:** The student knows that everyone has physical boundaries that are not to be crossed.
- Step 2 – FEEL:** The student knows when their physical boundaries are being crossed and how to communicate it. They respect the boundaries of others, and knows that boundaries must be communicated to be respected.
- Step 3 – HELP:** The student is willing to respect the boundaries, their own and those of other people.

## INTRODUCTION

Ask the students to recall how they usually behave when they are in a lift with strangers. Spread a large sheet of paper (150 × 200 cm) on the floor, which will serve as the “lift”. Choose a group of students to be the passengers. The others will observe the exercise. The passengers may enter the lift on the first four floors and get off on floors 8 through 10. They are to act as if they did not know each other, in what they feel is a natural way in such circumstances. Signal when the elevator stops on each floor. Ask the passengers to pay attention to how they feel and behave, and the rest, to note the most important observations concerning how the situation in the lift changes.

Ask the passengers:

- How was the experience?
- What did you feel?
- What made you feel that way?

Ask the observers:

- Did the passengers talk to each other?
- What was the nature of their conversations?
- How did the passengers behave?
- What could be the cause of such behaviour?

Talk to all the students. Use the following questions for reference:

- What does the word “boundary” mean to you?
- Why do people set boundaries?
- Can a person draw boundaries around themselves? What kinds of boundaries?
- What do you feel when your boundaries are crossed?
- What are the possible consequences of disregarding one’s own boundaries?
- Why do people have difficulty in consciously setting their own boundaries?

### Hint:

During the conversation, indicate that the boundaries that people set around themselves can be:

- physical: related to the body,
- psychological: related to emotions.



Objectives



Introduction



Emphasise that emotions are an important source of information about the violation of one's boundaries.

### BEFORE THE FILM

Ask your students to watch parts of a reportage about the people living in Calcutta, India. Ask them to think about the following issues while watching:

- What does the life of the Dalits, the lowest caste in India, look like?
- Why did Urmi decide to establish the New Light Foundation?

### FILM SCREENING



### AFTER THE FILM

Talk to the students immediately after watching the film. The following questions may help you:

- What are the reasons for the difficulties that the Dalits (untouchables) have in defining and enforcing their individual boundaries?
- Is belonging to the lowest group in the social hierarchy a closed boundary for the Dalits? How do they feel about it?
- How could they cross that boundary and break out of the poverty circle?

#### Hint:

Emphasise that by experiencing what your boundaries are, it is easier for you to understand and respect other people's boundaries. Point out to the students that by allowing others to cross your boundaries, you risk exposing yourself to violence.



Film  
– Introduction,  
screening and  
reflection



## TASK

**My boundaries**

Tell the students that they can only protect their boundaries if they:

- are aware of these boundaries (what causes them discomfort, especially physical discomfort; you can also mention psychological discomfort);
- openly talk about their boundaries.

Hand out worksheets. Ask the students to imagine that each of them is inside a balloon which, by expanding and shrinking, delimits their physical boundaries. The balloon is invisible to others. The students' task is to fill in the table in the worksheet.

Ask students to present their results.

**Hint:**

Explain to the students that the space around each person is divided into four zones:

1. personal (intimate) space, up to 40 cm: the closest area of direct physical contact;
2. individual space, from 45 to 120 cm: from the normal touch zone to where greetings, farewells, street chats and neutral conversations typically take place;
3. social space, from 125 to 360 cm: for relations without direct physical contact, e.g. during business relations, often delimited by a desk, a table, or a counter, which create a distance from the interlocutor;
4. public space, from 360 cm onwards: typical for a formal group, with limited direct communication and feedback. It is characteristic of this space that one person speaks and others listen.

Each of these zones is delimited by specific boundaries. The most important of these is the intimate space, which no-one is allowed to cross without the person's consent. One's individual space and the boundaries that determine it are also important. It is worth to know in which situations you feel discomfort when someone else enters this space.



Task



## CONCLUSIONS

Guide your students through the following steps:

1. Making them aware of the situation of another human being (**KNOW**);
2. Drawing their attention to the role of understanding another person's problem in emotional terms and relating to that person (**FEEL**);
3. Making the decision to help in an active way (**HELP**).

### KNOW:

Inform the students that everyone has the right to determine their own personal physical boundaries, regardless of where they were born, their age or social status. It is up to the individual to decide who, and in what situations, may cross these boundaries.

### FEEL:

Refer to the students' experiences from the first exercise; point out the emotions in a situation in which the physical boundaries of a person are crossed. Emphasise that such a situation causes various negative emotions.

### HELP:

Hand out paper sheets to the students. Ask each of them to share one conclusion from the lesson. Let them reflect on it and write down what was important to them, what they discovered, and what they learnt. Collect the sheets. Start the next lesson by referring to the students' reflections.



Conclusions



# INDIA

## APPENDIX

Appendix to the task "My boundaries"

## WORKSHEET

Describe the situations in which your balloon expands.

Describe the situations in which your balloon shrinks.

How can you react when someone crosses your boundaries?