



# BRAZIL

LESSON PLAN

## SEEK AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE





## BRAZIL: THE LARGEST COUNTRY OF SOUTH AMERICA

### Geography and nature: everything you could ask for

You know the map of Poland. Our country's area is more than 312,000 km<sup>2</sup>. Now let's enlarge Poland 27 times. This is the area of Brazil. It spreads over more than 8.5 million km<sup>2</sup>. The population of Poland is about 38 million people, whereas Brazil is inhabited by as many as 207 million. It is the fifth country in the world in terms of both size and population. It takes up about 47% of the area of South America. It borders with almost every country on the continent, except Chile and Ecuador. It is the only country in the world crossed by both the Tropic of Capricorn and the equator. Understandably, the natural environment of such a large area is very diverse.

It is here that we will find the largest plain in the world – the Amazonian Plain, which has the area of about half of Europe. It lies in the very humid equatorial climate zone and most of it is covered by evergreen rainforests (*selvas*), which are inhabited by the largest number of bird and insect species in the world.

Another important geographical region of the country is the Brazilian Plateau. It is dominated by the equatorial climate and types of vegetation such as the savannah (*campos*) or the thorny savannah (*caatinga*), which can be found in the drier areas of the Brazilian Plateau. The area to the north of the country is known as the Guiana Shield.

### Economy: Not only great opportunities, but also gigantic problems

Brazil produces many minerals such as crude oil, natural gas, iron ore, manganese ore, black coal, bauxite and precious sto-

nes. Agriculture also accounts for a significant part of the country's economy. Brazil is the world's leading producer of coffee, sugar cane, soya, corn, sweet potatoes, rice, tobacco and wheat. Cattle and pigs are bred here as well.

However, natural resources and the desire to exploit them have also given rise to various problems. In order to gain more land for agriculture, build roads, houses, mines and to harvest several extremely valuable wood species, large woodland areas have been cleared over the years. This has led to a reduction in the size of the forest, conflicts with local Indian tribes and an increase in the greenhouse effect, as well as accelerated erosion of soils that have never been very fertile to begin with.

### Education: A chance that's not equal for everyone

Although the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 guarantees access to free education, the reality is very different. Often parents do not send their child to school because they cannot afford the uniform, textbooks, notebooks or commuting. It is worth remembering that this is an enormous country and access to education is not easy also because of the distance to schools in some areas. Sometimes it happens that a family, faced with hunger, is forced to choose between education and an extra pair of hands to work and support the household budget, between school and a free meal at the workplace. After all, it's hard to learn when you're hungry.

### Favelas: Living on the edge of the law

The favelas are Brazilian poverty districts. The term is derived from the name of a plant that grows on the hills around Rio de Janeiro, where the first liberated slaves settled at the end





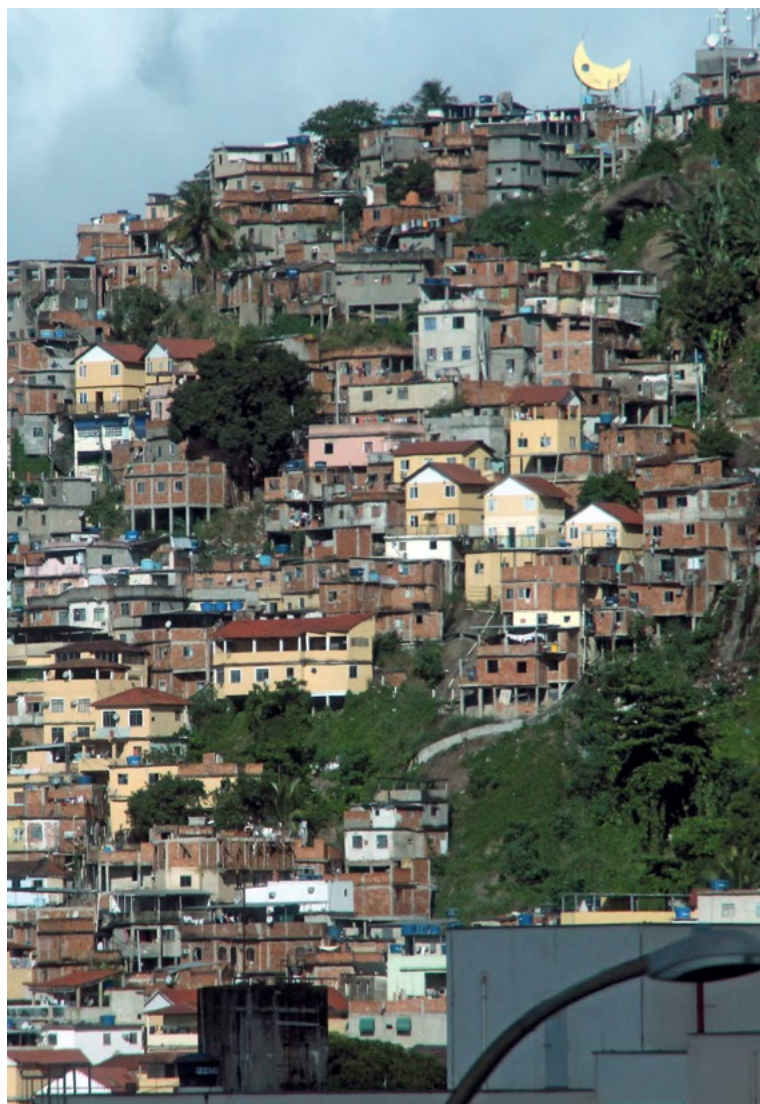
of the 19th century. What is considered to be the first favela was a settlement founded in November 1897 by war veterans left without a source of livelihood. Similar districts sprang up in the centres of big cities and ever since have been growing more and more, climbing upwards. It is believed that one in every two residents of Rio de Janeiro lives in a favela.

The industrial development of the 1960s and 1970s also contributed to the increase in the number of such neighbourhoods. In the 1970s, many people from rural areas decided to sell their farms and look for work in a big city. They hoped for a better life, but the cities could not provide everyone with a job or even decent living conditions.

The rate of urbanisation, i.e. the share of urban population in the total population of the country, currently amounts to over 80%. However, this does not reflect the overall economic development of the country. Brazil suffers from a problem known as pseudo-urbanisation. The favelas grew larger and larger and at some point started to live a life of their own. More of them were built over the years and no one cared about the lack of sanitation, electricity or waste disposal. Poverty districts are also where gangs are formed and often make and enforce their own law.

Hunger, drugs, shootings and death of loved ones are, unfortunately, all parts of everyday life for children living in favelas. How do you find your way in all this and live a normal life? How can you learn and go to school regularly? In this world, future is not a well-known notion. What counts is here and now.

It is good, then, that there are such kind adults here as Yvonne Bezerra de Melo, who knows that education is a chance to change one's life. Every day, she tells the children: "You can do this", "You are going to be okay", "Believe in yourself". It gives them hope for a better and safer tomorrow.





Duration:  
45 minutes

SUBJECT

## Seek and share knowledge

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

The knowledge of each of us is different, because we gain it in different situations or circumstances and have different aptitudes. This is why we say that each of us has an individual system of knowledge. There are no two people that would have exactly the same knowledge on the same subject. This is why sharing knowledge is one of the duties of a modern person. It takes place during a conversation, when we compare what each of us knows about a given topic, using “individual knowledge” to create “common knowledge”. An opportunity to share our knowledge and skills creates positive emotions. We feel satisfaction when we can pass on pieces of what we know to others. Similarly, also other people feel the need to share their knowledge. We need to be able to both use the knowledge of others and share what we know with them. This is what allows us to work together towards a common goal.



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 it is worth sharing one's knowledge and skills with other people.
- Step 2 – FEEL:** The student understands that sharing knowledge is a source of positive emotions and makes it possible to work towards a common goal.
- Step 3 – HELP:** The student is willing to share their knowledge with others.

## INTRODUCTION

Read the following text to the students:

"We meet regularly, once a week. However, teenagers visit our club once every two weeks. These meetings are longer. Sometimes they last a few hours. Young people show us new computer programs and how to use mobile phones. I'm good with computers and phones. But not everyone is... They created Facebook profiles for us, so now we are able to stay in touch even if one of us can't come to the meeting. We post information about what happened so that everyone knows... We talk on Skype. We organise various workshops together. Who would have thought that young people would be so eager to learn to crochet and do other handicrafts or that they would want to learn about the history of our city. We can still remember it, but it's ancient history to them... We share our knowledge and ask others to do the same."

Talk to your students by asking them such questions as:

- How do people share their knowledge?
- Why is it worthwhile to seek knowledge from other people?

## BEFORE THE FILM

Ask the students to watch a documentary together. Tell them that it is about the residents of a Brazilian favela and the staff of the school run by Yvonne Bezerra de Melo. Ask them to pay attention to what life in a favela is like.

## FILM SCREENING



## AFTER THE FILM

Talk to the students immediately after watching the film. Here are some questions that may help you:

- What is the life of the favela residents like?
- What knowledge and skills do Yvonne's employees try to share with them?



Objectives



Introduction



Film  
– Introduction,  
screening and  
reflection

## TASK

**This is how our knowledge helps others**

Divide the students into teams of several members each. Ask everyone in the team to think if they can remember any situation when their knowledge was useful to other people. Let the students talk about it. Ask them the following questions (you can write them down on pieces of paper and distribute them among the groups):

- › Who and how benefited from your knowledge?
- › In what situation were you able to share your knowledge with others?
- › How did you feel when someone was able to use your knowledge?
- › What did you learn from that situation? What did that experience give you?

Ask the group leaders to present the results of the discussion.



Task



Conversation

## CONVERSATION

Use this idea by Plato: "knowledge is the second sun of men". Ask the students how it can be interpreted in the context of their conversation. Discuss it together.





## CONCLUSIONS

Guide your students through the following steps:

1. Making them aware of what they know about 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:

Explain to the students that sharing knowledge is “giving sunshine to people” and is valuable for both those who share knowledge and those who benefit from it. A person who shares their knowledge should learn to do so in such a way that other people can benefit from it. Therefore, they must be able to convey the new information clearly, explain the parts that may be misunderstood, show how something is done, paying attention to whether the other person understands and will be able to repeat the activity being taught. A person who makes use of knowledge gains new information, previously unknown facts that they will be able to use, sooner or later, in their own life. This equips them with tools to cope with a situation that they have previously found difficult to solve due to lack of knowledge.

### FEEL:

Sharing knowledge evokes positive emotions. We feel good when someone else can benefit from our knowledge, when what we know can be used by other people. We also feel positive emotions when we are in a difficult situation and someone shares their knowledge with us, enabling us to overcome the obstacle, get out of this situation.

### HELP:

Ask the students to finish the following sentences on pieces of paper:

*I'm looking for knowledge because...*

*I can use my knowledge and skills to...*

Start the next lesson with a presentation of the ideas written down by the students. Ensure the anonymity of the authors, if they wish to have it. You may encourage the students to discuss this topic.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix to the task “This is how our knowledge helps others”

Everyone in the team should think if they can remember any situation when their knowledge was useful to other people. Discuss the topic, trying to answer the following questions:

- Who and how benefited from your knowledge?
- In what situation were you able to share your knowledge with others?
- How did you feel when someone was able to use your knowledge?
- What did you learn from that situation?
- What did that experience give you?