

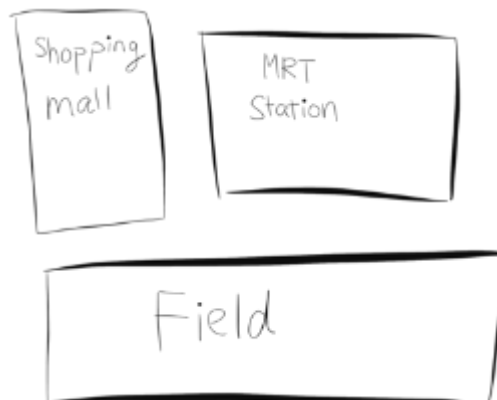
Everyday Borders

Context: Out of Eden Learn is an online learning community designed to promote intercultural understanding among diverse youth. We group classes of similarly-aged children from different geographic and socioeconomic contexts to go on a 'learning journey' together. Our various curricula invite students to (1) slow down to observe the world carefully and listen attentively to others, (2) share stories and perspectives, and (3) make connections between their own lives and bigger human stories. So far, over 20000 students from 60 different countries have taken part.

Below is an extract that Mojo612 - the chosen pseudonym of a student at a girls' school in Singapore - posted in response to an activity that is part of our 'Stories of Human Migration' curriculum. She took a slow walk in her neighborhood looking out for everyday borders, both visible and invisible. Then other students from her learning group - who also did the same activity - saw her work and posted comments. In this case, the various students who replied are from an alternative high school program in Beaverton, Oregon in the United States.



mojo612 Singapore, Singapore 06.jun.2016



... A boundary which I have noticed is the "invisible" boundary between the locals and foreign workers in Singapore. This boundary is particularly evident in my neighbourhood which is located the foreign workers' dormitory. At the shopping mall near my house, the foreign workers often do not enter the malls. They usually sit at the benches outside the mall or the field near the mall. The locals, on the other hand, enter the malls and rarely interact with the foreign workers. The "invisible" boundary which exists between us is most likely a personal boundary.



xyz123 Beaverton, OR United States 06.jun.2016

I never thought about the invisible fence! That is so interested to think about. Everyday we are faced with borders, some visible some not. Do you think boundaries are a good thing or a bad thing or both?



mojo612 Singapore, Singapore 07.jun.2016

I think boundaries can be both good and bad things. For example, good boundaries can be certain laws meant to protect our safety. However, certain boundaries may be bad. For example, in the past, India had a caste system which segregated the people in India. This caused a lot of economic inequality. So, I think boundaries can be both good and bad things.



ess02 Beaverton, OR United States 06.jun.2016

why don't the foreign workers go in to the shopping malls?



mojo612 Singapore, Singapore 07.jun.2016

That's a really good question! I'm not exactly sure because I don't really communicate with the foreign workers much. However, the foreign workers usually gather at the field where they can sit as a group and chat. Sometimes, they play cricket at the field.

So, I think it may be partially due to the fact that they gather in groups. Going into the malls and occupying the benches for long periods of time may cause the mall operators to be unhappy since the other shoppers may not be able to occupy the seats in this case.



synchron47 Beaverton, OR United States 06.jun.2016

Do you think that boundaries are a necessity of everyday life? Would we be better off without any boundaries at all? Or do you think that these invisible borders are just a defense mechanism because we have some sort of idea of who people are before we even meet them? Just a few thoughts I would love to hear your answers too!



mojo612 Singapore, Singapore 07.jun.2016

... I think that these invisible borders may be defense mechanisms! In Singapore, children are always told, "Don't run away, later apu neh neh come and catch you." "Apu neh neh" refers to Indian foreign workers. Sometimes, the phrase is replaced by "policeman". So I do think that it's possible that invisible borders are defense mechanisms since we think that we know how people are like even before we meet them. Children are thus scared of Indian foreign workers and policeman due to what their parents tell them. What we think may be correct or wrong but it doesn't matter because the mindset in our mind isn't going to change if we develop defense mechanisms and set up invisible borders.