

School Guide: **FIRE IN OUR HEARTS**



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This BYkids School Guide is designed to help teachers expand students' use of this film from passive watching to active, deeply personalized learning. Included are three sample Pathways, each driven by an essential question to challenge students. Use the Pathway questions to start discussions in small groups or with the whole class. We've also added Discussion Starters and Suggested Projects, but we encourage you and your students to follow your own pathways and create your own projects.

BYkids wants our films to be part of compelling, project-based, collaborative learning experiences that are cross-curricular, link cultures and countries by themes we all share, and spur students to develop the competencies needed to become global citizens while mastering necessary college and career readiness skills. Most of all, we want students to value their own stories while learning from the stories of others around the world. We encourage you to share the creativity and knowledge that flourish in your classroom as you and your students expand on these BYkids suggestions and create your own learning units. We'd love it if you would share your discoveries and ideas with us at **BYkids.org!**

BYkids
THEIR WORLD THEIR FILMS

ABOUT THE FILM

FIRE IN OUR HEARTS was filmed, directed and narrated by 16-year-old Jayshree Janu Kharpade. It tells the story of her experience learning the social and economic power of education in her home country, India. Jayshree's narrative speaks to the hundreds of thousands of young girls and women around the globe who go to great lengths to receive their education, a human right they deserve.

80 million tribal people live in India today. Many served as former slaves to landlords because they failed to repay small loans. They did not know their bondage was against the law, because they were illiterate. In the late 1970s a movement to free these slaves began near the city of Mumbai. This labor union pushed formerly enslaved people, like Jayshree's family, to advocate for themselves by educating their children. More than 10 years ago, the group founded a residential school for girls. Nearly every enrolled girl is the first in her village to receive an education. However, it has still been very difficult for the school to find enough resources, teachers, and parents who can afford to give up the labor and childcare assistance provided by their daughters.

Jayshree is from the Warli tribe in Maharashtra State. At an early age she was enrolled at a local primary school; but when she turned seven, her parents decided they had other plans for her: she needed to return home to help raise her four younger brothers, and contribute to her parents' labor at a brick kiln site. Her mother explained at time, "Education is not for poor people like us. It's a luxury we can't afford."

Four years later, local union activists persuaded Jayshree's parents to allow her to complete her education at a special school for tribal girls called Eklavya Parivartan. In Jayshree's words, "All the girls at our school including me, have faced struggles at a very young age". Exceptionally bright and determined, she quickly made up the years of schooling she missed, and rose to the top of her class. The impact of her education is evident: she excelled at both her academic work and extra-curricular activities, and she is now committed to empowering others in her community through education. She also intends to pursue a career in engineering.

Education is both a human right in itself as well as a pathway to the pursuit and enjoyment of other rights. In the developing world, it is more often that girls and marginalized groups, such as the poor and disabled, are denied this right. In India, while girls attend primary school in roughly equal numbers to boys, the gap widens with age, as more girls are forced to drop out to marry or help with work at home. And yet, research shows that nothing can be more transformative for a society than including educated women in the formal labor force.

FIRE IN OUR HEARTS spotlights the transformative importance of educating girls – a crucial lesson for communities across the globe, that is too often taken for granted in the Western world and neglected in developing countries. FIRE IN OUR HEARTS is an inspiring reminder that education can unlock girls' power as informed citizens who are able to advocate for themselves and others.

ABOUT JAYSHREE'S MENTOR

Jayshree's BYkids film mentor is the renowned Joyce Chopra, a pioneer of documentary cinema whose numerous titles include *That Our Children Will Not Die*, about primary health care in Nigeria, and the autobiographical *Joyce at 34*, which is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Chopra has produced and directed a wide range of award-winning films, ranging from *Smooth Talk*, winner of the Grand Jury Prize for Best Dramatic Feature at the Sundance Film Festival, to the A&E thriller *The Lady in Question* with Gene Wilder.

ABOUT BYkids

BYkids is a global educational movement that uses storytelling through film to inform, engage and inspire action. BYkids provides kids around the world with both the video cameras and the mentoring to make short documentaries about their lives. Renowned filmmakers mentor these young people in the art of filmmaking. Through innovative distribution platforms, BYkids films enable fresh, new perspectives to be seen and shared by a global community.

Join us at BYkids.org

THE GUIDE

PATHWAY 1

Jayshree focuses on the importance of allowing girls to have an education and the importance of education to fight bias, discrimination and exploitation.

WHY IS EDUCATION IMPORTANT?

From the Film

"The next day I went to your house, and I asked your father why you weren't going to school. I told him that if you don't go to school it would be a big loss. You'd always be illiterate. Without an education you wouldn't be able to protect yourself in the future, even when you got married, you'd be vulnerable to exploitation and disrespect."

~ Union Activist

Discussion Starters

- Why is a formal education important for girls from Jayshree's village and in her school? Why is it important for all girls and boys? Why can a lack of education hold a person back in life?
- The concept of 'universal education' means a country provides an education for all children. What are the possible outcomes of this idea? Should it be implemented worldwide? How?
- How did not being able to read and write hold back the people in Jayshree's village earlier? How are education and discrimination against the civil rights of a group related?

Suggested Projects

- What part does education play in ending discrimination against girls? Research some of the biased arguments that were used historically to hold women back and to argue against their need for an equal educational opportunity with men. Some of these may even seem funny now, such as the argument that girls are too 'hysterical' to do difficult jobs, or that girls are bad at math or science.

Create a cartoon, skit, or other type of presentation to illustrate some of these biased beliefs. For each dated belief, add an explanation of when, how and why each was changed.

Be sure to cite facts as well as changing social attitudes, and use your (or your group's) creativity to make your presentation communicate to as many different people as possible.

- The girls in Jayshree's school had goals for their future, and all of those goals depended upon an education. Are the girls and boys in your class and school different? How could you find out?

With a small group, write a survey, give it to boys and girls in your school, and find out the reality, the way a social scientist would. It might be good to avoid having students write their names (to keep privacy) but to note their (identified) gender on each survey.

You may want to ask about goals, how important education is to students, and even how realistic they think it is to reach their goal. You might want to ask about their reaction to biased statements such as "Boys are smarter than girls in math," or "It's more important for girls to be pretty," to also get honest data on attitudes or perceptions in your school.

Analyze the results, comparing the goals of boys with girls. Are there differences?

Next, research the amount of education needed for each career. Are there biases in expectation for girls vs boys?

Create a presentation for your school, post on a bulletin board, or include in the school newspaper. Choose a title that tells why attitudes about education are as important in the U.S. as for girls in India.

- Do you think that a certain amount of education should be universal? Why or why not, and to what extent? Write a persuasive essay or create a persuasive video to present your views. Be sure to include logic and facts to support your opinions.

You will need to research facts to show: 1) that education costs money to provide, 2) how the financial and economic results compare with the costs, 3) the human rights issues related to education, and any added issues you and/or your group sees as crucial.

THE GUIDE (continued)

PATHWAY 2

Jayshree shows in her film how the labor movement in India was a key force in changing the national attitudes and programs for educating girls in India.

HOW CAN YOU CHANGE BIAS AGAINST GIRLS OR OTHER GROUPS OF PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

From the Film

"We organized our people and taught them we are not animals, we are human beings. We have the right to live life with dignity. By 1995 we realized that we'd successfully secured many of our rights. It was time we turned our attention toward education. It's now your responsibility to also empower our people through your education."

~ Vivek Pandit

Discussion Starters

- The bias against the group or caste that Jayshree was born into meant she had fewer opportunities. How does this type of bias translate into personal and economic harm if it is not changed?
- What historical examples of bias against girls are you familiar with? How has some of this discrimination been overcome? How is it still being fought?
- What parallels are there between the struggle in India to end the caste system and the civil rights movement to end discrimination in the U. S., for example against persons of color?
- How can an organized movement, such as the labor movement, work for good changes? What are effective ways to change attitudes and policies, even laws?

Suggested Projects

- Jayshree shows the girls singing, "We Shall Overcome" in the film. This is a hymn that was used in the U.S. during the Civil Rights Movement. It became an anthem for African Americans suffering under racism and discrimination. With a small group or individually, write your own anthem to rally your school or community to end discrimination. Teach it to your friends and perform it for your class or school.
- With a small group, identify a type of bias that needs change. Identify several different ways to help people understand why and how to change. Create a Plan for Change for your group's ideas, and implement the plan.

If possible, make it a multi-step plan. For example, it could start with posters explaining why the bias needs to be changed, and progress to a March for Change at your school.

- With your class, create an art (or performance art, music, dramatic arts, etc.) special exhibit to tell about the need for each person to guard against bias against girls and others. To start, you may want to decide on a more specific theme for the exhibit, or you may want to have each participating group or artist select their theme.

Encourage personal themes as well as historical themes and themes learned from the film, FIRE IN OUR HEARTS. Each member of the class can contribute. A group mural could be a participatory item. If possible, hold a Gallery Opening in your school to share your works with the school community.

- Create a “Fire in Our Hearts” night at your school. You may want to show the film and organize a discussion about it; highlight some of the projects around the film; have a “Thank You for Education” award for an educator who has helped many of you; organize a panel discussion about discrimination around the world against girls; or make your own class plan for the activities. Share the different fires in your classmates’ hearts with parents, siblings, and the community.

THE GUIDE (continued)

PATHWAY 3

Jayshree is very open about the conflicts, even sacrifices, in her country and family related to getting an education.

HOW DO YOU MAKE DECISIONS WHEN PERSONAL AND FAMILY NEEDS SEEM TO CONFLICT WITH THE GREATER GOOD?

From the Film

"I wanted you to be educated. I knew that by getting an education you could become independent one day, you could stand on your own. You should pursue your education for as long as you want to. It will give you a good future."

~ Jayshree's Father

Discussion Starters

- Jayshree's father wanted her to attend school even though it meant difficulty for their family. Jayshree's uncle made a very different decision for his family. What was hard about each decision?
- Deciding what the 'greater good' is often means that compromise and even sacrifice must be made. Who made other sacrifices and compromises in the film? Why were there no simple decisions?
- Jayshree missed three years of school and was far behind when she was allowed to return. She managed to make up all three years and succeed. How can you help yourself and others who have fallen behind?

Suggested Projects

- Retell Jayshree's or another historical story in your own version – in a video, skit, dance, short story or other creative expression.

Focus on the difficulty of balancing individual and family needs with what is best for the greater good. Be sure that your work is thoughtful and does not simply view people as all good or all bad, but as dealing with difficult decisions and outcomes. Be sure also to respect the privacy of family and others, treating them with respect as Jayshree did her uncle.

- Create a table or other visual presentation to show the positive outcomes of a decision and the sacrifices or compromises that have to be made by each group involved.

Explain your table. For example, you could illustrate Jayshree's story – the good is that she went to school, and a sacrifice is that she is away from her family; her family feels

good knowing she is getting a good education and future, but her aunt is sacrificing by having to care for two families.

- Take the second project (above) to a schoolwide, community, national or international level – create a presentation to show the positives of a policy you choose to explore (e.g. universal education), and the compromises or even sacrifices that each group must make to achieve it. Propose what you see as a reasonable set of compromises to set a policy for the greater good of people.
- Tell your own story in any medium you choose. Focus on the theme of your own desires to make life better for more people than just yourself or your friends and family.

How do you think you can use your story to inspire others to help you create change for the greater good? How did you make a hard decision with your family? What sacrifices and compromises have you made? Your family? Be sure to respect the privacy of family and others, treating them with respect as Jayshree did her uncle.

Your goal is the greater good but recognizing that concessions and even sacrifice may be needed. Do not embarrass or disrespect anyone.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Dear Educator,

You and your students, in defining the creative and collaborative details of each Pathway and Project, will implement many different standards not limited to any one content area but focused on critical and rigorous, evidence-based thinking. Following are provided some College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards, Common Core ELA and Math standards, and Next Gen Science Standards, but you and your students will go beyond those limited standards. We hope you will share your experiences and ideas at BYkids.org.

PATHWAY 1

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.6 Use technology to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.

CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess and credibility and accuracy of each, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCRA.W.10 Write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice

MP1 Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP4 Model with mathematics.

MP5 Use appropriate tools strategically.

MP6 Attend to precision.

MP7 Look for and make use of structure.

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES

SEP 4 Analyzing and interpreting data.

SEP 5 Using mathematics and computational thinking.

SEP 7 Engaging in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

PATHWAY 2

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.W. 3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES

SEP 7 Engaging in argument from evidence.

SEP 8 Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information.

PATHWAY 3

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