

What is EARTH FOCUS?

Earth Focus [EF] is a screenplay writing competition for youth under the age of 25. EF seeks to empower youth by allowing them to creatively express their ideas and opinions about the environment and environmental degradation that may be affecting their families, communities, schools, or homes. Groups of students will be charged with the task of writing a 5 minute screenplay – in either English or Nepali – about an environmental topic of their choosing. The screenplay can include environmental degradation they see, solutions to common environmental problems, or a biography of a prominent Nepali environmentalist.

Why the environment?

Environmental degradation is an enormous problem throughout the world -- including in Kathmandu and Nepal writ large. This project seeks to enable Nepali youth to critically investigate their environment and tell a story. It turns the traditional notion of education on its head – instead of attending a lecture, listening to the radio, or watching TV, youth are encouraged to actively participate and contribute to the environmental discussion, focusing on topics that are of interest to them.

What will you do with the screenplays?

Collected screenplays will be judged by a panel of judges including A/V specialists, environmental scientists, and activists from a range of disciplines and backgrounds. The top 2-4 screenplays selected through this judging process will be made into professional short movies by Nepali actors, directors, and producers. Final products will air on local television stations, at a regional showcase, and will be streamed over the internet and burned to DVD and VCD.

What are the goals of the project?

During the initial EF event, we hope to receive between 75-100 screenplays from local youth and produce 1-2 short movies. The goals of the initial event are to test the feasibility of such a competition in Nepal and establish the structures necessary to scale the project up in following years. Each process of the project will be carefully tracked and documented in order to highlight successes and refine problematic spots.

All of the screenplays submitted will be compiled and placed on the web for viewing. Additionally, screenplays will be analyzed by social scientists and activists to find areas in which environmental education is lacking. In this way, the project aims to help outreach organizations better hone their messages and focus their programs.

Timeframe

The Earth Focus 2008 contest will launch on 22 February 2008 and run until Earth Day [22 April 2008]. Between 23 April and 15 May, judging of screenplays will take place. Between 16 May and 25 June, 1-2 short movies will be professionally produced.

Things to do & Questions

- What is the best way to get the word out to Nepali youth about the competition? Face to face? Radio? TV?
- Who are the best organizations to lead the charge? What environmental organizations to outreach in Nepal?
- What networks of Nepali actors and directors can be tapped into?
- Potential Contacts: ECCA, ENPHO, Practical Action, Society of Environmental Journalists, Ashoka Foundation, USEF Nepal, USAID, UNDP, UNEP