



**EARTHRIGHTS SCHOOL
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP & ADVOCACY TRAINING PROGRAM
(AUG-DEC 2022)**



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PROGRAM INFORMATION

EarthRights International (ERI) believes in the power of law and the power of people in defense of human rights and the environment, which we define as *earth rights*. For more information about EarthRights' work, please visit our website: <https://earthrights.org/>

We are living in unprecedented times with unprecedented challenges: The pandemic, which has digitized much of our work; climate change and its threats to our land and communities; shrinking civic space; and the increasing presence of harmful development in the Mekong region sets the context in which activists and earth rights defenders must adapt and think creatively to address these challenges effectively.

In response to this need to adapt, EarthRights International is transforming its flagship training program, EarthRights School. The EarthRights School is **an intensive, residential training program** for activists and earth rights defenders from the Mekong region who are working on environmental and human rights issues. **The goal of this year's three-month program is to build the power and effectiveness of Earth Rights Defenders in the Mekong region to actively engage within this changing context.** By equipping activists and ERI alumni with updated and relevant knowledge, skills, and networks, we can strengthen our collective impact to defend human rights and the environment in these unique times. For more information about the curriculum themes, please see the *Program Elements* section.

What do you gain from this training program?

At the end of this training course, you will...

Knowledge & Skills:

- Practically understand project cycle management and know how to use it as a tool for organizing initiatives and campaigns.
- Practically understand how to plan for a campaign and practice setting campaign vision/goals/objectives, action plans, fundraising, and managing your resources.
- Identify legal tools and approaches related to your advocacy/campaign and be ready and able to apply them to your community context.
- Enhance research and writing skills and practice using these skills for advocacy purposes.
- Develop advocacy tools using storytelling and media for your organization and community, and know how and when to use these tools safely during your campaign or project.
- Identify, understand, and map actors and stakeholders involved in your advocacy/campaign and when and how to engage and communicate with them.
- Learn and practice community organizing skills and approaches such as facilitation, inclusive organizing, and verbal and nonverbal communication
- Enhance digital skills and literacy, including digital security, video and photography, and practice using these skills and tools for advocacy purposes
- Understand the global and local context and connections of climate change, and learn from climate justice movements across different regions.

Opportunities:

- Learn with and from diverse activists and earth rights defenders in the region, and practice living and learning cross-culturally
- Learn from and consult with local and international experts including lawyers, researchers, campaigners, and facilitators who can give insight and guidance on developing your project and skills.
- Implement a project/campaign/action plan upon graduating
- Strengthen your network by connecting to the skills, knowledge, and opportunities of our alumni network of over 600 alumni.

SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

This training program is for you if you are...

- An EarthRights International alumni from any of our training programs (including EarthRights School, Mekong Legal Advocacy Institute (MLAI), Mekong Legal Network (MLN), and Health and EarthRights Training (HEART))
 - OR you are working for an alumni organization, or you are connected to and referred by alumni from our training programs
- Working in/for a community impacted by development projects OR working for an organization that works with a local community in the field of human and environmental rights.
 - Your organization must commit to support your participation before, during, and after the School.
- Committed to going back to the organization/community and implementing a project with the organization/community after completing the program.
- A community organizer, trainer, advocate, and/or campaigner with minimum 2-3 years of experience and want to further develop and update these skills with particular focus on project management, climate justice, and digital skills and literacy.
- Not currently studying in university or other educational programs/institutions.
- Able to be away from your work for three months while you are studying. *“EarthRights will cover the costs of travel and visa expenses, food and lodging and a small monthly stipend while training in Chinang Mai”*
- Able to communicate the basics of human rights and environmental justice in **English**. (This is a regional program, and classes/coursework will be in English).

***EarthRights School strongly encourages applications from women, members of ethnic minority and indigenous groups, and those living in rural communities. We do not discriminate based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, political belief, age, gender, physical ability, or sexual orientation. ***

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

This year’s 3-month in-person training curriculum focuses on, advocacy & campaigns, climate justice, project management and digital skills and literacy– knowledge and skills that are necessary to adapt as an activist in the Mekong Region.

After being selected as a participant, you will be required to actively participate in a one-month online preparation period in August 2022. The remote preparation month is dedicated to developing a project idea with your organization, providing targeted English support, and conducting a needs assessment. The needs assessment will inform the exact content of the curriculum in order to ensure the course is relevant to your needs and the needs of the organization/community you work with. The online preparation period will require approximately 4-6 hours per week, which includes meeting us online, targeted English learning, and meeting with your organization.

Afterwards, you'll be ready to travel to Chiang Mai where you will live and study with 14-16 other activists in the Mekong region for three months. During this period, you will strengthen and practice fundamental skills to support your growth as an activist including stakeholder mapping and engagement, research, writing, digital skills, holistic security practices, facilitation, storytelling, media-messaging, and strategic campaigning. This learning takes place both inside the classroom, and outside the classroom. The field experiential learning component of the curriculum enables you to practice what you learn, in real-time with partner communities in Thailand. As you learn more skills and knowledge, you will develop and refine the project idea you started with in the preparation period into an action plan. By the end of the course, you will have a finalized project proposal that is ready to implement with your organization or community. EarthRights may provide follow-up support for the project implementation. Exact details of the follow-up will depend on the nature of your project, and will be clarified and agreed with you by the end of the course.

While training at our center, our schedule usually runs Monday through Friday, approximately five hours of in-class training per day. The class times are flexible, depending on the teacher, content, and activities. You should also expect (individual AND group) homework and assignments during the week, which are usually completed in the evening or on the weekends, sometimes over the course of many days.

After graduating, you will join or reconnect to our diverse and extensive alumni network, with access to our Alumni Support Program which is being renewed and strengthened this year.

Please note that EarthRights School is an independent program not affiliated with any university and therefore does not offer university or academic credit

Learning Approaches & Methods

EarthRights School emphasizes the value of local knowledge, wisdom, and life experience of the participants. Therefore, it adopts a **participatory-learning approach**. Participatory learning and teaching methods focus on maximizing participation of students in the learning process. It includes sharing and learning from your strengths and life experience as well as those of your classmates, and using activities that allow learning by doing.

All classes incorporate hands-on learning, which includes:

- Active learning: Problem solving, discussion, critical thinking, asking questions, debate, brainstorming, making connections to your life experiences and others', working with case studies.
- Cooperative learning: Teamwork, working collaboratively on projects and problems, learning from and supporting each other.

- **Experiential learning:** Learning lessons through experiences such as role-play, simulations, presentations, outdoor activities, and working in-the-field with community organizations through field training.

These diverse activities and approaches may be different or unfamiliar for you. At EarthRights School, we believe that growth happens when you challenge yourself, your abilities, and your mindset. Therefore, we invite you to get out of your comfort zone and be open and excited to try activities, experiences, and approaches that may be entirely new to you.

RULES OF PARTICIPATION

1. You must commit to the full time of the course, including the one month online preparation period, three months in-person training in Chiang Mai, and any follow-up needed after graduating. It is not allowed to arrive later or leave earlier than the program dates in the timeline below.
2. You must come prepared to the in-person training with a project/campaign/advocacy idea that is approved and supported by their organization. You must be ready to develop this idea into a project, and be ready to implement it after graduation.
3. You must have strong elementary or intermediate English language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) with a commitment to learn and practice English. You should be able to communicate your ideas and discuss human and environmental rights topics. If you are shortlisted, your English level will be determined through an interview and English assessment.
4. You must live at the training center and follow the rules regarding security, safety and communal living. You will share community duties such as cooking, cleaning and maintenance work.
5. You must be open to meeting and creating a community with people from different backgrounds and respect people's backgrounds and identities. You should fully participate in communal life and participatory decision-making with these diverse people.
6. Participants must be willing to follow and respect the non-discrimination policy of the school. EarthRights School has a zero tolerance policy for discriminatory attitudes and behaviors based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, political belief, age, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, or other status.
7. Unless otherwise communicated, you are expected to attend all classes, for the whole day. When in class, you are expected to fully participate in the experiential and participatory learning activities and methods as mentioned in the *Learning Approaches* section. You are expected to be on time for class every day, and submit your assignments/homework on time as well.
8. You must prioritize your full participation during the program, over other work and studies. We will not accept students who are currently studying in University or other educational programs. You will need to communicate with your organization to take three months leave from work responsibilities in order to participate in the program.

- You must have a valid passport at the time of acceptance into the program. EarthRights will not pay for your passport.

TIMELINE

Date (2022)	Activity
6 May	EarthRights School Information Meeting, Q&A <i>**We recommend organizational partners, alumni, and interested applicants to attend this meeting for more information about the different approach and changes we are making to this year's School program**</i>
15 May	Application Deadline
1-6 June	Notice of shortlisting
13-24 June	Interviews with shortlisted applicants
1 July	Selection results announced
1-10 July	Sign MoUs
15 Aug- 17 Sep	Online preparation & needs assessment
12-18 Sep	Arrival dates to Chiang Mai
19 Sep	First day of course
9 Dec	Last day of course & Graduation
10-15 Dec	Departure Days

APPLICATION PROCESS

- The application deadline is **15 May, 2022. Applications received after this deadline will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.** Applications may be sent by post or e-mail (*see contact information on the title page*).
- Complete the application form and answer the essay questions in English language only.
- References: You must have two people complete the recommendation form. Your referees must come from a teacher from your previous studies, an EarthRights alumni, or a community/organization leader. These recommendation forms should be submitted together with your application.
- Due to the high number of applicants, EarthRights School will only contact short-listed applicants to set up an interview and English assessment.